THE ULTIMATE MUSIC GUIDE

CROSBY, STILLS NASH & YOUNG

WE ARE GOLDEN 50TH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL

"HAVE YOU FELT ANY BAD VIBES?"
BACKSTAGE ON THE '74 TOUR

"IT'S NEVER OVER!"
EXCLUSIVE INTRODUCTION BY GRAHAM NASH

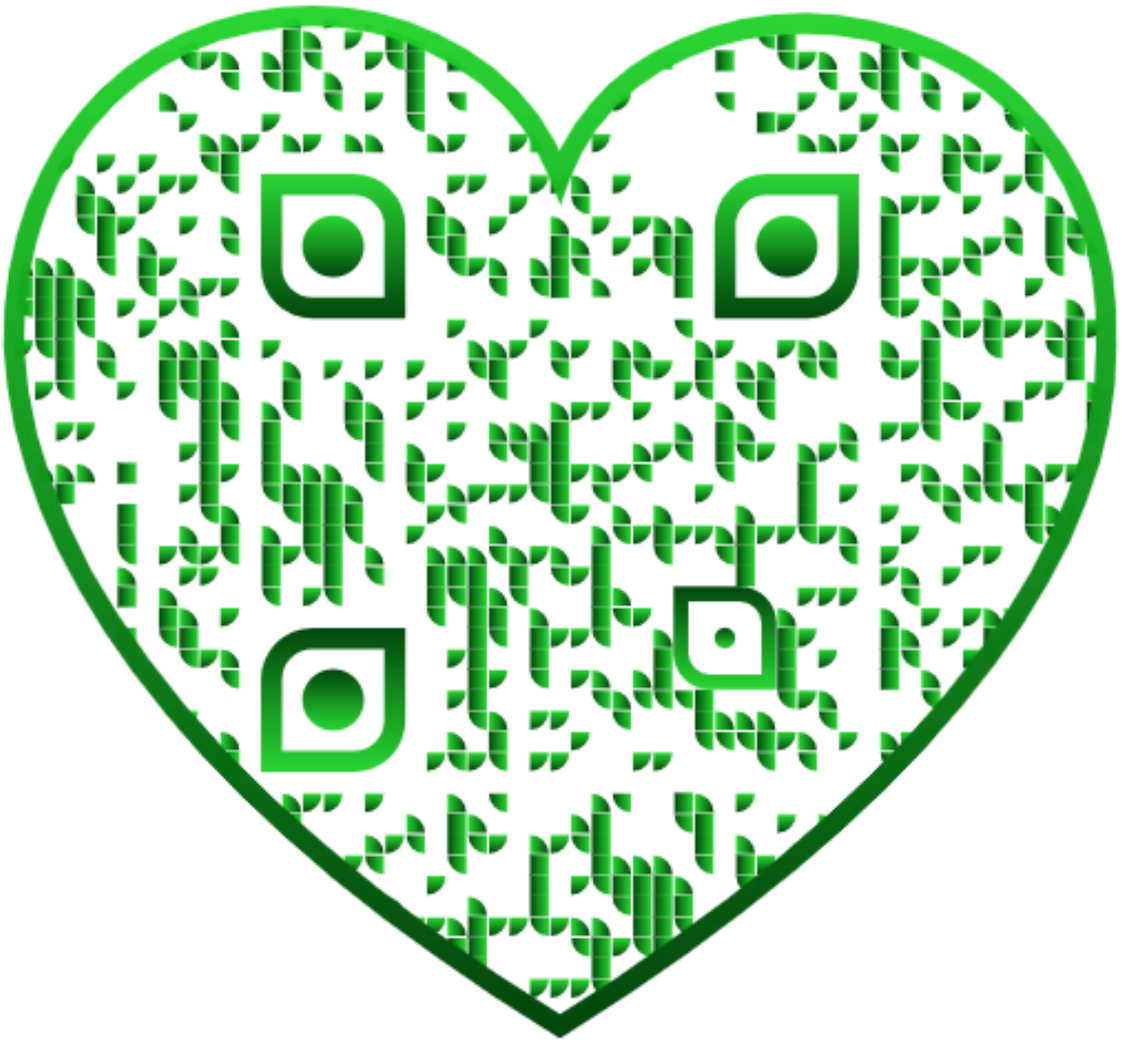
DÉJÀ VU
CLASSIC INTERVIEWS REDISCOVERED

LONG TIME COMING...
CSNY
...LONG TIME GONE
THE FULL STORY

TEACH YOUR CHILDREN
EVERY ALBUM, REVIEWED

C,S,N: SOLO | BOOKS | TOURS | DVDS | SIDEMEN | HOBBIES

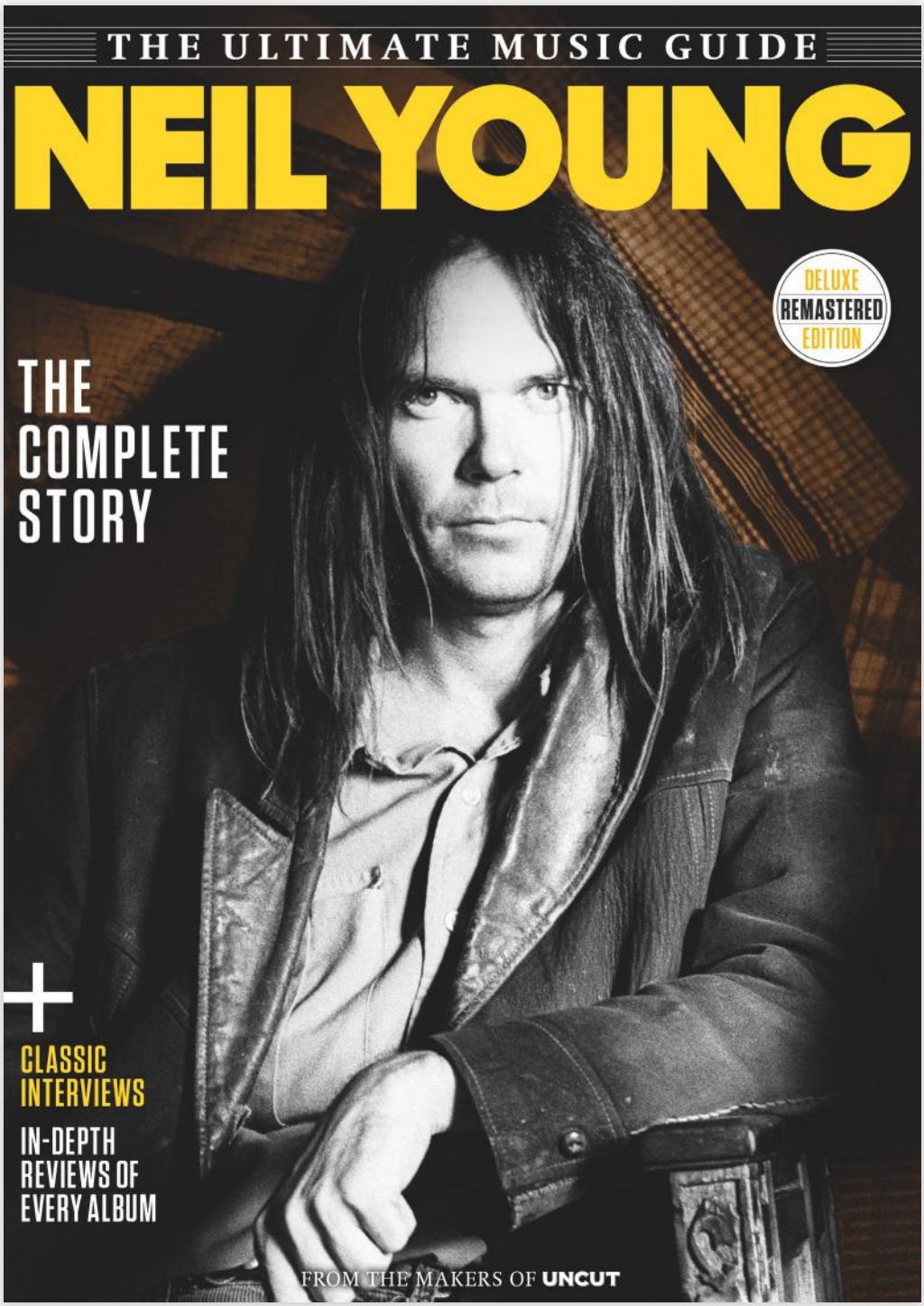
FROM THE MAKERS OF UNCUT



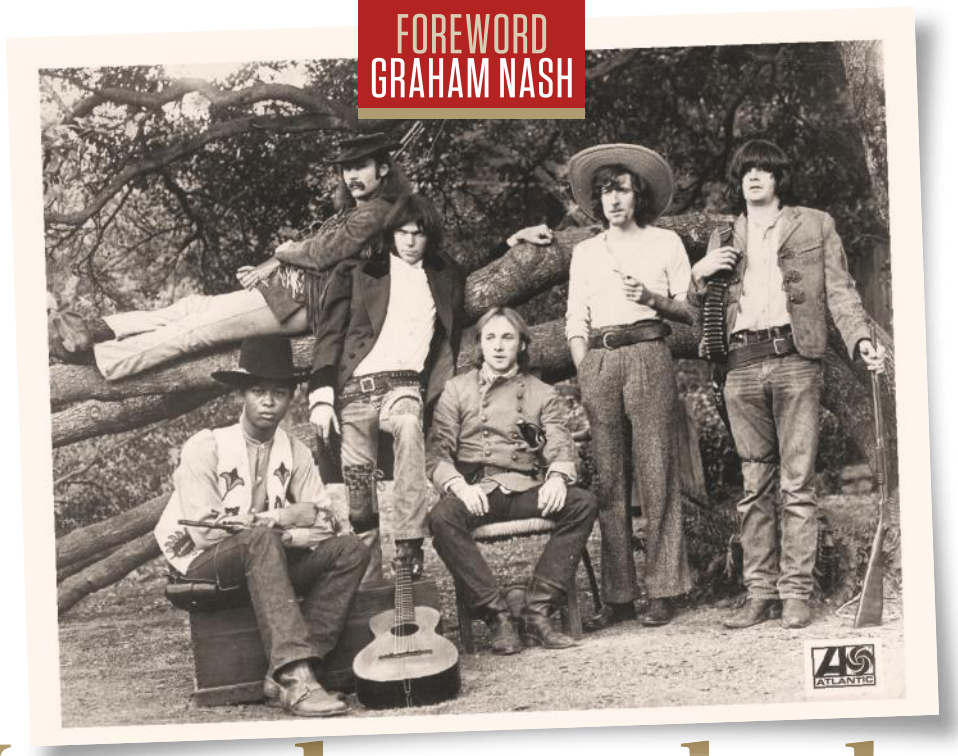
FROM THE MAKERS OF UNCUT

ULTIMATE MUSIC GUIDES

ESSENTIAL GUIDES TO THE MOST INSPIRATIONAL ARTISTS OF OUR TIME



AVAILABLE TO BUY NOW AT UNCUT.CO.UK/STORE



"We made people shake their asses – and think"

GRAHAM NASH tells how CSN found Y, flourished, and may yet rise again. "Who knows what's going to happen?"

CSN started in Joni Mitchell's living room. I'd flown from London to spend a few days with Joni and when I got to the house David and Stephen were having dinner with her. We smoked a big one and then David said to Stephen, "Hey, play Willy that song we were just working on." Buffalo Springfield had just broken up and David had been thrown out of The Byrds, so they were trying to get some kind of an Everly Brothers thing together. They'd been rehearsing Stephen's song, "You Don't Have To Cry". They sang it and it was beautiful. I asked them to sing it again and it was still beautiful. When they did it a third time, I put my harmony on and my world changed instantly, as all of our lives did. When the three of us first blended our voices into one, I realised I'd have to go back to England and quit The Hollies, leave everything behind and just follow that sound that we'd created. I wanted it desperately.

With our past histories in The Hollies, the Springfield and The Byrds, we knew what a hit record sounded like. And we were convinced that the first CSN album would go to the top of the charts, which it did. Stephen had played so many instruments on it: lead guitar, rhythm guitar, bass, B3 organ, piano, percussion. When it came to going on the road to tour it, we knew we had to get somebody else in. Stephen wanted Jimi [*Hendrix*] or Stevie Winwood in the band, but they had other things to consider in their lives. It was only when David and Stephen were having dinner at [*Atlantic boss*] Ahmet Ertegun's house in New York City that Ahmet suggested we bring in Neil. Stephen went crazy: "Wait a second. I just spent two years of madness with this guy, what do you mean 'Neil'?" But once Stephen had swallowed his emotions and David had given his opinion, it was obvious they wanted him in there. I'd never met him, so Neil and I had breakfast alone at a coffee shop in Greenwich Village. I said to him, "OK, why the fuck should we invite you into this band?" He looked at me: "Have you ever *heard* Stephen and I play guitar together, man?" I was totally on board after that.

Everybody brought something different to the band. Crosby's music was very much influenced by jazz, which he loved, and his chord structures and sense of timing were unique. Stephen is more Latin and blues oriented and is obviously a great lead guitar player. Neil brings this dark edge to everything. I don't mean that in a negative sense. I mean, you only have to look at Neil to realise that part of his world is dark. He brought a sense of discipline to the band, a sense of unity. I'd learned how to write a decent melody when I was with The Hollies. But when I came to America and started hanging out with David, Stephen and Neil – and living with Joni – I began to put better lyrics to the melodies. My songwriting changed a great deal from that moment.

I think we put music out there that was as real and as pointed as we could make it. And as humane and political as we could. We brought music into this world that made people both shake their asses and think. Probably the biggest highlight for us was in August '74. CSNY were playing somewhere in New Jersey, in front of 80,000 people, and Richard Nixon actually came on television during our intermission, saying that he was going to vacate the office of president of the United States the following day. We all watched it on a small black-and-white television set backstage. It was perfect timing. When we came back out for the second half of the show, I said to the crowd, "He's gone!" Everybody knew what I meant and there was a tremendous roar. Standing in between Neil and Stephen during one of their extended conversations with guitars is a treasured memory too. There are so many highlights. The only regret I have is that I'm sorry that Crosby went so far off the rails with drugs at one point in the journey.

I'm not so sure that the story of CSNY could ever really be told. There have been a couple of new books about us recently, but it feels like both of them are just lists of how we fucked up. I didn't sense the incredible joy that we felt, being in love with each other and in each other's music, creating this body of work that travelled around the world.

Is the door closed for CSNY to happen again? It is at the moment, because David's been a complete asshole to us and nobody wants to talk to him. But you know what? We're musicians and who knows what's going to happen. I certainly don't. It's never over, but we have to like each other before we can make music together.

When it comes to our legacy, I'm thrilled with what we achieved. That goes for the records that David and I made as Crosby/Nash, as well as CSN and CSNY. I'm so very proud to have been a part of all that music for all those years. ●

AS TOLD TO ROB HUGHES. PHOTO BY MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES

CSNY CONTENTS

6 CROSBY, STILLS & NASH REVIEW In Joni Mitchell's house, a transatlantic trio for the ages forge their first long-player

8 DÉJÀ VU REVIEW A sadder, expanded group produce a platinum-selling follow-up

10 "The whole scene is getting looser" INTERVIEW A new supergroup forms around four harmonious oddballs

20 STEPHEN STILLS REVIEW Hendrix, Beatles and old supergroup pals join in on Stills' first

22 IF I COULD ONLY REMEMBER MY NAME REVIEW Crosby enlists friends to weave an elegy for changed times

24 4 WAY STREET REVIEW The double album of CSNY's tempestuous 1970 tour

26 SONGS FOR BEGINNERS REVIEW An inspired solo debut illuminates the two sides of Nash

28 "It's very doubtful the four of them will record together..." INTERVIEW David Geffen details the power struggles and touring hassles

34 STEPHEN STILLS IN THE 1970s REVIEW A stimulated Stills storms the '70s. Until the well runs dry...

38 "The lights went on in the room and it was full of policemen..." INTERVIEW Stills, aka The Loner, opens up on drug busts and band infighting

42 WILD TALES REVIEW Nash's frazzled but melancholy second solo long-player

44 "We're growing up – at last" INTERVIEW Following his *Wild Tales*, N reunites with C, S and Y

48 "Have you felt anything resembling bad vibes?" INTERVIEW We never split up, say CSNY as they reconvene for a huge 1974 tour

54 CROSBY & NASH IN THE 1970s REVIEW A brotherhood emerges – long on harmony if a little short on songs

56 "The year of the singer-songwriter, again" INTERVIEW With CSNY project 'Human Highway' canned, Nash and Croz continue recording together

60 LONG MAY YOU RUN REVIEW Stills and Young shoot for, but miss, an album that captures the "spirit of Springfield"

62 "It wasn't a rivalry" INTERVIEW After an abrupt parting with Young, Stills hits the road solo

66 CSN REVIEW Reunited unexpectedly, the core trio set sail for softer waters

68 DAYLIGHT AGAIN REVIEW An unstable Crosby signs up for a fourth CSN studio album

70 CROSBY, STILLS & NASH IN THE 1980s REVIEW Politics and nostalgia as CSN members tackle the synthetic '80s

72 AMERICAN DREAM REVIEW As Crosby cleans up, CSNY reconvene to record their first studio album for 18 long years

74 LIVE IT UP REVIEW The Berlin Wall tumbles – CSN are ready with a song

76 AFTER THE STORM REVIEW Decades after Woodstock, CSN rediscover a counter-cultural relevance

78 CROSBY, STILLS & NASH IN THE 1990s REVIEW Between CSN and CSNY albums, Stills releases a low-key affair. Crosby starts to regain power...

80 LOOKING FORWARD REVIEW An out-of-contract CSN hook up once again with a reflective Young

82 "It's a benevolent dictatorship. Neil is in charge" INTERVIEW CSNY take a combative political show on the road

92 CROSBY, STILLS & NASH IN THE 2000s REVIEW The members of CSN pursue productive solo paths

96 "What happens is out of our control" INTERVIEW CSN return to the fray with a tour and a moot covers album with Ruck Rubin

102 "I regret the time I wasted being wasted" INTERVIEW A newly inspired Crosby talks about his past, D Trump and his relationship with Nash

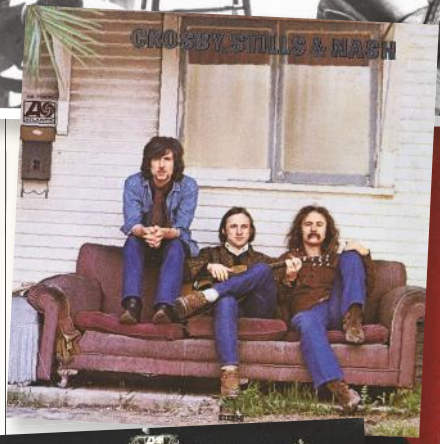
108 "CSNY have to be in love with each other to make great music" INTERVIEW 2018. His personal circumstances much changed, Graham Nash reflects on his career

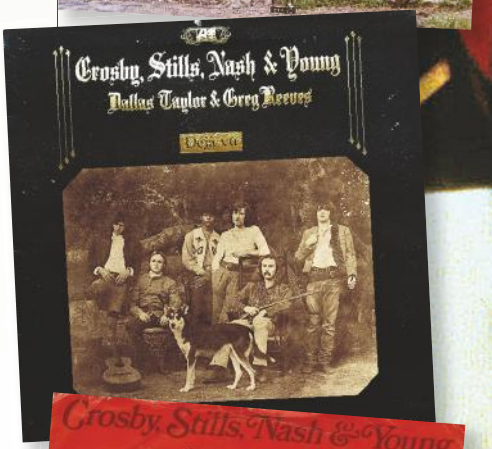
114 LIVE AND COMPILATIONS REVIEW The tangled tale of CSNY's various comps and live albums

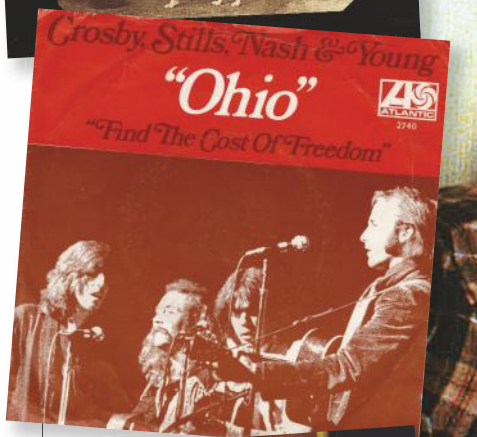
118 MISCELLANY Exploring the tours, books, sidemen, rarities and pastimes associated with CSNY

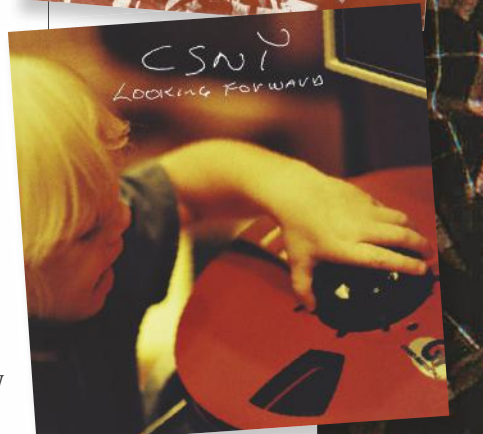
122 STOP ME News of Neil Young's imminent arrival sees an interview with Croz take an unexpected turn

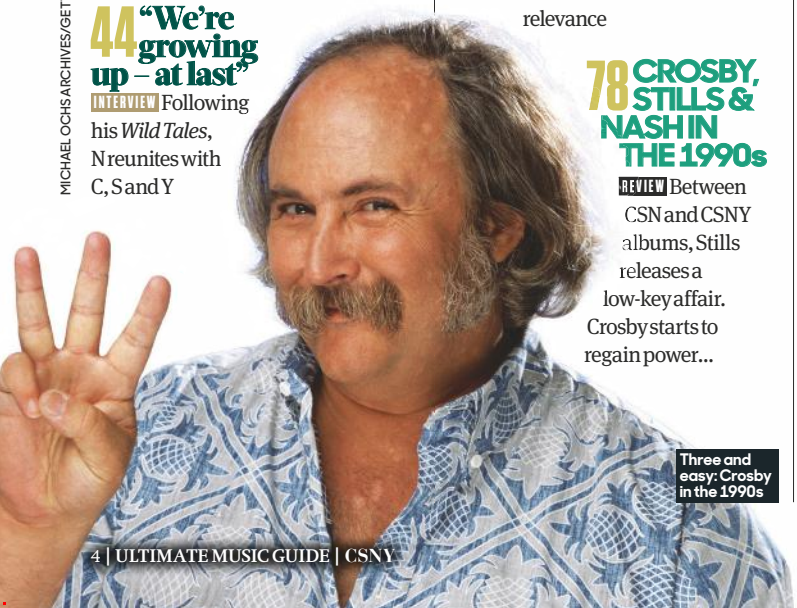
Stadium-sized egos: CSNY on the So Far Tour, 1974











Three and easy: Crosby in the 1990s

MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES, ROGER RESSMEYER/CORBIS/VCG VIA GETTY IMAGES

Peace, love and 21st-century politics: CSNY in the 2000s

BANDLAB TECHNOLOGIES
-2, 110 SOUTHWARK ST,
LONDON SE1 0SU

EDITORIAL

EDITOR JOHN ROBINSON
UNCUT EDITOR MICHAEL BONNER
ART EDITOR MARC JONES
SENIOR DESIGNER
MICHAEL CHAPMAN
DESIGNER LORA FINDLAY
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT
MARK BEAUMONT
PRODUCTION EDITOR
MICK MEIKLEHAM
SENIOR SUB EDITOR
MIKE JOHNSON
PICTURE EDITOR PHIL KING
THANKS TO JOHNNY SHARP
COVERS PRINTED BY
WALSTEAD ROCHE
TEXT PRINTED BY
WALSTEAD BICESTER
COVER PHOTOGRAPHS BY
WENN.COM,
TOM BLAU/CAMERA PRESS

PRODUCTION & OPERATIONS

AD PRODUCTION & ACTING PRODUCTION MANAGER
BARRY SKINNER
PRINT WALSTEAD UK LIMITED
DISTRIBUTED BY MARKETFORCE (UK) LTD, 5 CHURCHILL PLACE, CANARY WHARF, LONDON E14 5HU

CLIENT SERVICES

BRAND MANAGER, MUSIC
MATTHEW CHALKLEY
07966 159962
COMMERCIAL EXECUTIVE, FILM & ENTERTAINMENT
GEMMA LUNDY 07711 957566

BANDLAB TECHNOLOGIES

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
MENG RU KUOK
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER
IVAN CHEN
AVP, WEB TECHNOLOGIES
LAURENT LE GRAVEREND
AVP, COMMS & PARTNERSHIPS
LAUREN HENDRY PARSONS
SNR MANAGER, BRAND & GROUP STRATEGY KRYSTLE HALL
MANAGER, CONTENT STRATEGY
ILIYAS ONG
UK COUNTRY DIRECTOR & HEAD OF STRATEGY & PARTNERSHIPS
HOLLY BISHOP 07946 513298

BANDLAB
TECHNOLOGIES

All content copyright BandLab UK Limited 2019, all rights reserved. While we make every effort to ensure that the factual content of UNCUT Magazine is correct, we cannot take any responsibility nor be held accountable for any factual errors printed. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or resold without the prior consent of BandLab UK Limited. UNCUT Magazine recognises all copyrights contained within this issue. Where possible, we acknowledge the copyright.

This publication occasionally uses language which we do not endorse, but which has been retained for historical veracity

GETTY IMAGES / HANDOUT

CROSBY, STILLS & NASH

Crosby, Stills & Nash

RELEASED MAY 29, 1969

This time it's personal. In Joni Mitchell's house, a transatlantic trio for the ages is born.

BY JOHN ROBINSON

HARD to believe, with the band members not speaking to each other, their website dormant since 2012, but half a century ago, Crosby, Stills and Nash joined together not only as a band, but as a sanctuary against the outside world.

Expelled from The Byrds for excessive talking and fraternising at the 1967 Monterey Pop festival, David Crosby was a free-floating scenester, an instant party, the man of his generation most likely to pull a sword from a stone. Fresh from butting heads with Neil Young in Buffalo Springfield, Stephen Stills was a virtuoso of electric blues, and the writer of "For What It's Worth", a song which showed that a political conscience could indeed reside on the Sunset Strip. When Graham Nash appeared to them in his lover Joni Mitchell's kitchen on Lookout Mountain Avenue in 1968, a British LSD convert whose beat group were unwilling to sing his new songs, he didn't only bring a third harmony – he helped cement a new ethos.

Even 50 years on, freighted with history and anecdote, *Crosby, Stills & Nash* sounds newly minted, gleaming with the promise of this new start. It's not a remotely controversial album (the tunes are lovely, the voices pure, the intentions in this new relationship honourable), but it is also the first stirrings of a mellow, conversation-pit revolution: rejecting groups for individuals, hits for personal expression, and the fraught pop scenes of London and LA for the bucolic reverie of the Canyons. It was new, but it would certainly catch on.

Throughout the album, there's a sense of innocence, embarking on new journeys, of skipping work to do your own thing. Nash's irrepressibly jaunty "Marrakesh Express" is a pretty literal narrative song (it's about a train journey undertaken with his wife, while in The Hollies) but it hints at long-denied adventures (see also his "Pre-Road Downs" and "...*Hide the roaches!*"), its cheerful velocity an obvious expression of his general demob happiness. The first song that the trio sang together, meanwhile, was the Stills composition "You Don't Have To Cry". It's effectively the theme song for the record. Together the singers are kissing off lovers, bands, straight lives, all those who don't fully understand their new personal journeys. "*You are living a reality I left years ago*," they sing, sweetly, looking back at these poor unenlightened souls. "*It quite nearly killed me.*" Not only is it the key line in an incredibly beautiful song, it is the likely pinnacle of human passive aggression.

David Crosby's composition "Wooden Ships" feeds into the mood of mellow escapism. Written with Stills and Paul Kantner aboard The Mayan, the yacht Crosby bought with his financial settlement from The Byrds, both vessel and song subsequently became floating metaphors for his release from the timetabled pop life. Never mind the publishing split, this was friends floating without agenda in Florida: "*Very free and easy...*"

As idyllic as it may have all looked and undeniably sounded, this easeful rejection of the recording industry and its mores was a little deceptive. Ahmet Ertegun, the Atlantic Records founder, is credited with "spiritual guidance" on the sleeve, but he also offered hard-nosed A&R. Stills was a horse he had backed since the Buffalo Springfield, and he now bet on him again: advancing the money for Stills – the driver of the new project – and Crosby to pursue Nash to England and persuade him to turn the harmony they had attained in Joni Mitchell's home in 1968 into a more permanent arrangement.

Nor did the group waste time during the trip to Europe. While Crosby freaked The Hollies with the news of their imminent lineup change, the trio auditioned for George Harrison and Apple Records A&R Peter Asher in a Kensington apartment with a view to securing a deal with Apple (Apple's verdict: "not for us"). Signing instead with Ahmet and Atlantic, the group wrote intensively at a house on Sag Harbour in the Hamptons,

CRITICS' VERDICTS

"They are inclined to jerk their phrasing a bit, which has certain attraction, but what I liked best about this album are the varied instrumental passages between the singing, some of which are very beautiful. A most interesting first LP, which should attract a lot attention for this exciting new group." **Allen Evans, NME, 02/08/1969**

"Nash's falsetto harmonies sound much less strained than on some of his work with The Hollies." **MM, 09/08/1969**

TRACK MARKS

1. Suite: Judy Blue Eyes ★★★★★
2. Marrakesh Express ★★★
3. Guinnevere ★★★★★
4. You Don't Have To Cry ★★★★★
5. Pre-Road Downs ★★★
6. Wooden Ships ★★★★★
7. Lady Of The Island ★★★
8. Helplessly Hoping ★★★★★
9. Long Time Gone ★★★★★
5. 49 Bye-Byes ★★★

Label: Atlantic
Produced by: Stephen Stills, David Crosby, Graham Nash
Recorded at: Wally Heider's, San Francisco
Personnel: David Crosby (vocals, guitar), Stephen Stills (vocals, guitar, keyboards, bass), Graham Nash (vocals, guitar), Jim Gordon and Dallas Taylor (drums), Cass Elliott (backing vocals)
Highest chart position: UK 25; US 6

then returned to their base in San Francisco to work low-key at Wally Heider's studio.

Having hit commercially already with another trio (the *Super Session* album alongside Al Kooper and Mike Bloomfield), Stephen Stills was in 1969 hitting a peak confluence of technical chop, supreme self-confidence and songwriting form (as Graham Nash might say: "Helplessly Hoping" – are you kidding?!). In the studio Stills now played bass and keyboards, booked the extra hands (like Dallas Taylor, later drummer on *Déjà Vu*) and delivered fierce acoustic guitar. The group admiringly called him "Captain Manyhands". Outside the group, some called the album "Stills, Stills & Stills".

The confidence the group had in themselves and the righteousness of their singular path was there from the opening track. "Suite: Judy Blue Eyes" is folk music as oblique strategy, in which the trio transformed Stills' three not-quite-working-yet sketches about his girlfriend Judy Collins into one unified song which abundantly now did.

The assurance and sense of adventure is sprinkled throughout, as the group unmoor themselves from conventional practice and set sail. Nash's "Lady Of The Island" is a minor piece but in its meeting of romantic intimacy and too much information ("*Our bodies were a perfect fit, in afterglow...*") it too pushes at the boundaries of the love song. On "Wooden Ships", meanwhile, lyricists Stills and Kantner stretch the scansion of the verses the better to accommodate their de rigueur hypochondria: "*Say, can I have some of your purple berries/ Yes, I've been eating them for six or seven weeks now/Haven't got sick once/Probably keep us both alive.*"

The assurance and sense of adventure is sprinkled throughout

The atmosphere is wonderfully upressured, if again that impression is a little deceptive. The band's pre-recording ritual, according to Graham Nash, was to smoke a joint and snort a line of cocaine. Their vibes were generally spectacular, but their adherence to strict tempo was not a given. It took multiple takes for the trio and their engineer Bill Halverson to achieve the optimum, briskly bucolic pace for their work.

Crosby, whose work stuck out in a more heavily templated group, flourishes in this atmosphere. In a spacious, permissive context the drifting modality of his "Guinnevere", later covered spectacularly by Miles Davis, is a perfect gear change. His "Long Time Gone", meanwhile, throws the door open not only to the more rocking grooves of *Déjà Vu* but also to the politics which become the group's insurance against solipsism. Written in the aftermath of Bobby Kennedy's assassination, it's groovily heartfelt stuff: Crosby the soul, Nash the harmony, Stills taking care of everything apart from vacuuming the studio floor. Weirdly, though, in its blend of fiery, concerned rock, it's one of only the moments on the album which is precisely of its time.

Elsewhere, in its introspection, melody and harmony, even its drugs, *Crosby, Stills & Nash* is looking beyond the 1960s. The album anticipates the melodic introspections which would dominate much of the decade to come, gently asserting its influence far beyond. ●

CROSBY, STILLS, NASH & YOUNG

Déjà Vu

RELEASED MARCH 11, 1970

The sadder, expanded supergroup hit the studio. Creative conflicts arise, but ultimately forge a platinum-selling behemoth.

BY PETER WATTS

ADDING a new talent to any all-star team – be it a group of footballers, a company boardroom, a movie cast or a band of best-selling singer-songwriters – is always a risky business. The late addition might have the chops, but that doesn't mean their face will fit. Their skill set might not be compatible or, more likely, egos might clash unproductively.

So when Crosby, Stills & Nash decided they needed an instrumentalist to support Stills and bolster their live sound, and then agreed to recruit a figure as gifted and ornery as Neil Young, there was no guarantee it would work. The gamble was rewarded. CS and N parked Y on the far side of the ampersand, and although *Déjà Vu* lacked the collegiate sparkle of *Crosby, Stills & Nash*, the quartet's album went straight to No 1, selling almost twice the amount of the debut. It also spawned three hit singles: Stills' arrangement of Joni Mitchell's "Woodstock" and Nash's pair of "Teach Your Children" and "Our House". Young's non-album single "Ohio" also charted during this period.

Young was clearly a good pick, but that didn't mean he was first choice. That honour fell to Steve Winwood, who was otherwise engaged with Blind Faith. But Ahmet Ertegun's suggestion Neil Young was, for Stills at least, a known quantity and was starting to carve out a career as a singer-songwriter, having released two solo albums in 1969. Moreover, his voice added texture, while his guitar-playing brought out the best in Stills. CSNY's second show was at Woodstock and it was followed by a series of dates across the US – including Altamont – and a handful in Europe. Between dates, recording sessions started and they'd eventually rack up more than 800 hours in Wally Heider's two Californian studios. The work was painstaking. The singers often worked separately, with Stills again taking the principal role of shaping the sound and attempting to replicate the clean, pure feel of CSN even if the circumstances were rather different. Given that Young had recently hooked up with Crazy Horse and loved working fast and hard, a culture clash was inevitable.

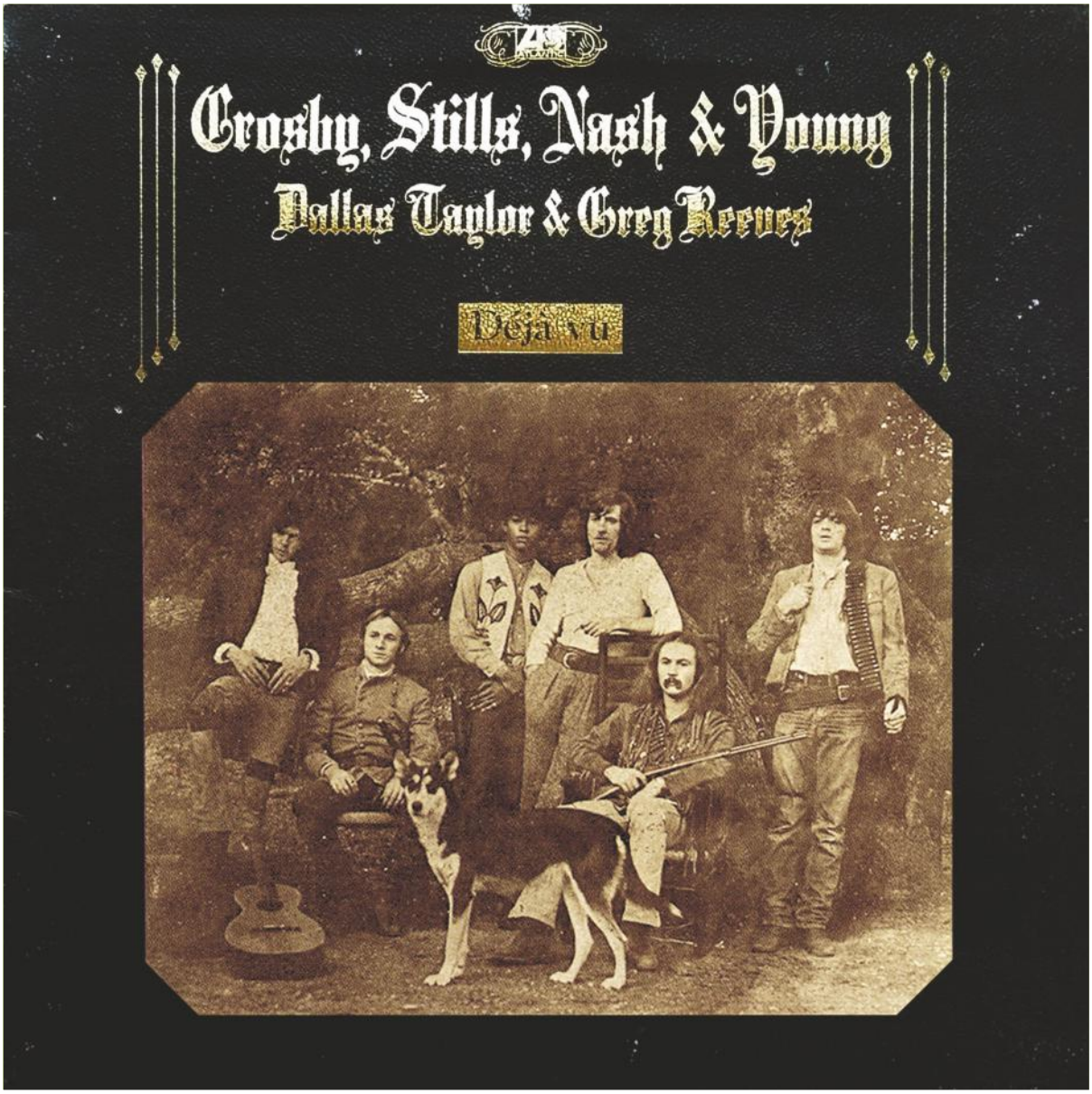
The first album had been written and recorded in a spirit of positivity, with all three musicians in the middle of consuming – and inspirational – love affairs. By *Déjà Vu*, Stills and Nash's relationships (with Judy Collins and Joni Mitchell respectively) had ended, while Crosby's girlfriend Christine Hinton was killed in a car crash days before recording started. Heavy stuff, but the album tried to maintain an upbeat outlook and – with the notable exception of Young's relentlessly pitying "Helpless" – was in many ways less personal and introspective than *Crosby, Stills & Nash*. Perhaps reality was too painful to be yet addressed in song? Or perhaps that was being saved for the four best-selling solo albums that each artist would release in the immediate aftermath of *Déjà Vu*.

The plucky spirit was captured by the rocking opening track, "Carry On", written by Stills midway through the session as a rallying cry for his increasingly beleaguered bandmates, assailed by personal trauma, arduous recording sessions and inter-band conflict. The chirpiest song on the album was Nash's "Our House", a throwback to happier times and written

CRITICS' VERDICTS

"And finally, a rocking bit of Stills/Young boogie called 'Everybody I Love You', where the whole band really gets it on. And you won't believe the high, soaring, floating quality of vocals."
Allen McDougall, MM, 28/03/1970

"The opening song, 'Carry On', really cooks with electricity, then someone throws the switch and we get the incomparable, unaccompanied voices of the four guys. Harmonic perfection."
Rock Mann, NME, 21/03/1970



TRACK MARKS

1. Carry On ★★★★
2. Teach Your Children ★★★
3. Almost Cut My Hair ★★★★
4. Helpless ★★★★
5. Woodstock ★★★★★
6. Déjà Vu ★★★★
7. Our House ★★★
8. 4+20 ★★★
9. Country Girl ★★★★
10. Everybody I Love You ★★★

Label: Atlantic
Produced by: Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young
Recorded at: Wally Heider's Studio C, San Francisco, and Wally Heider's Studio 3, LA
Personnel: David Crosby (vocals, guitar), Stephen Stills (vocals, gtr, bass, percussion), Graham Nash (vocals, keys, gtr, perc), Neil Young (vocals, gtr, keys, harmonica), Dallas Taylor (drums), Greg Reeves (bass), Jerry Garcia (pedal steel), John Sebastian (harmonica)
Highest chart position: UK 5; US 1

when he was still living with Mitchell. It celebrates domestic mundanity with McCartney-esque panache, even though Nash says he'd had enough of it within days of writing it. Nash's other contribution was the anti-war "Teach Your Children" (with pedal steel from Jerry Garcia), one of several political songs on an album that amplified countercultural values. It was followed by "Almost Cut My Hair", which saw Crosby contemplate the political implications of long hair in a mood of belligerence and paranoia. It was one of the few songs that featured all four members of the band – plus Dallas Taylor and Greg Reeves – even if Stills, Nash and Young were adding instrumental support rather than vocal harmonising.

"Woodstock" also saw the four superstars combining for a more driving version of the Mitchell original. Here came some of the conflict created by Young's introduction. Young adored Stills' raw original vocal; Stills considered it "excruciatingly out of tune", and later replaced it with something more in keeping with the slicker CSN brand. The perfectionist Stills wanted to drop "Almost Cut My Hair" for similar reasons, but Crosby stood his ground. Young's contributions were therefore a little out of step with the prevailing mood. "Helpless" was a desperate cry for aid that sounds like a dry run at the plaintive spirit that would dominate *After The Gold Rush*, while "Country Girl" was a mini-epic in the style of "Down By The River" and "Cowgirl In The Sand" without ever quite reaching those standards. Young also co-wrote cursory closer "Everybody I Love You" with Stills, but didn't appear at all on half the tracks, among them Stills' fine "4+20" and Crosby's jazzy title track.

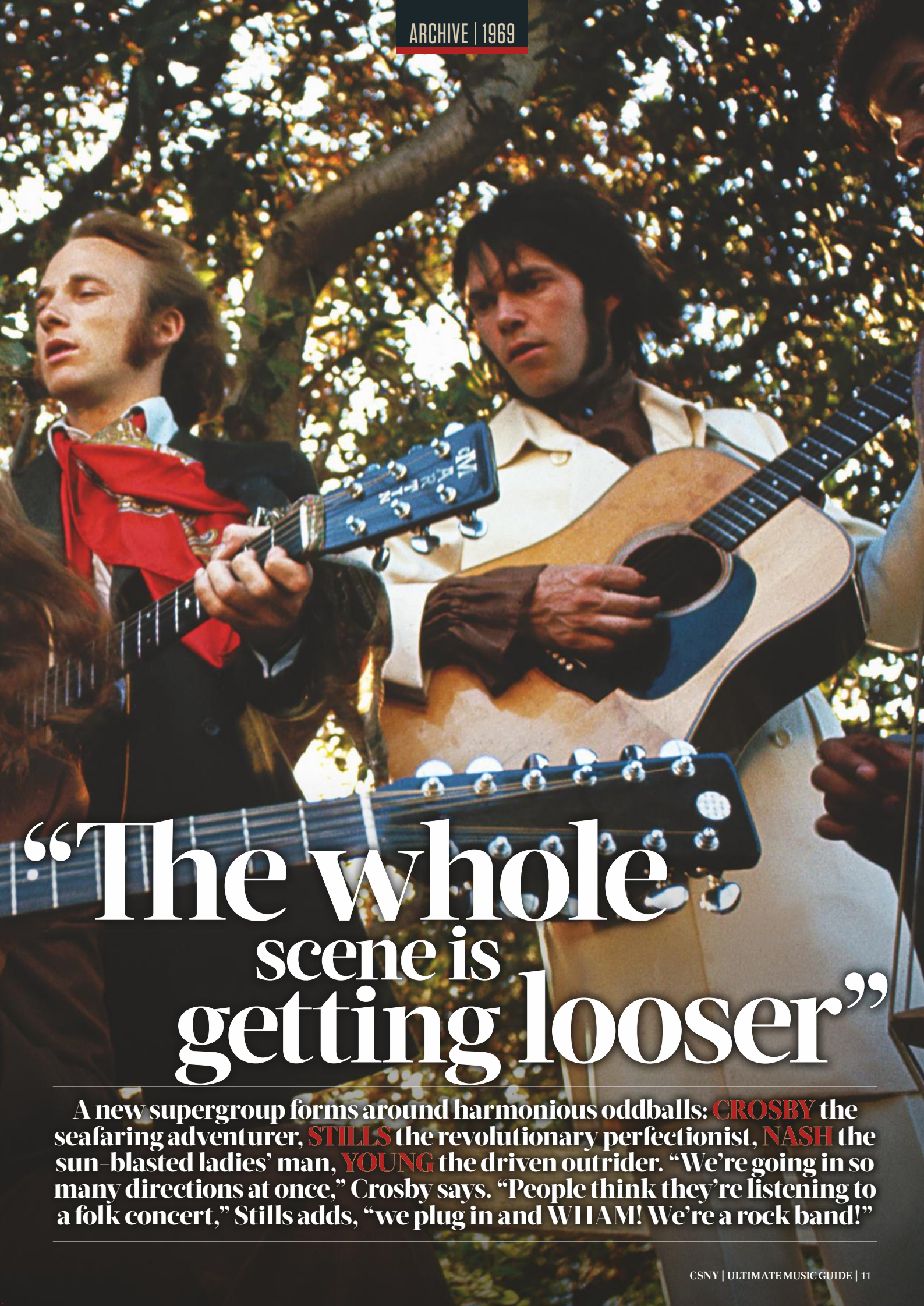
> The perfectionist Stills wanted to drop "Almost Cut My Hair". Crosby stood his ground

That song took days to record, and the lengthy gestation process seemed to epitomise the feel of an album that reached for the same breezy good cheer as the debut and more or less achieved it, despite the personal difficulties of the songwriters and the change in atmosphere that Young inevitably brought with him.

Somehow, through all this, the original band concept remained intact. It was there in the occasional beautiful harmonies that still leaked out, the shared political outlook, the golden dream of "Woodstock" and the sepia-tinged cover art that reproduced a Civil War-era tinplate photograph. The band hired Wild West costumes for a shoot that took place beneath a vast tree in Crosby's garden, and were joined by a neighbour's dog as well as Reeves and Taylor. The inner gatefold maintained the mythos, featuring snaps of the band practising at Stills' house in Hollywood. The cover was the most expensive ever produced. It has gold leaf lettering and each cover photo was hand-glued onto a heavy, leather-style paper that was meant to look like an old family album and was manufactured at a single family-owned paper mill in Georgia. Stills told Atlantic they could bear the cost and he was right. *Déjà Vu* went platinum within two weeks of release and is still selling today, more than 14 million at the last count. It's the best-selling record of all four musicians' careers. ●

HENRY DILTZ/GETTY

Four play: Nash, Crosby, Stills and Young with drummer Dallas Taylor (far left)



"The whole scene is getting looser"

A new supergroup forms around harmonious oddballs: CROSBY the seafaring adventurer, STILLS the revolutionary perfectionist, NASH the sun-blasted ladies' man, YOUNG the driven outrider. "We're going in so many directions at once," Crosby says. "People think they're listening to a folk concert," Stills adds, "we plug in and WHAM! We're a rock band!"

MELODY MAKER AUGUST 9, 1969

CROSBY, Stills and Nash are no longer just the ex-Byrd, ex-Buffalo Springfield and former Hollie supergroup. They've added new partners to the rock band with a name more like a group of City solicitors.

Newcomers to the "firm" are drummer Dallas Taylor, guitarist Neil Young and former Motown session man Greg Reeves – and they're already at work on the second album. The first featured just the original trio plus Taylor.

"Neil joined roughly a month ago," said Dave Crosby on the transatlantic phone from Los Angeles. "He and Steve have been friends for a long time – from pre-Springfield days – and they kept in touch after the Springfield split.

"He and Steve have always had a good musical relationship, and when we decided to make the three-man vocal group we had into a band he came along. We tried to work it out with Bruce Palmer on bass but he's into Indian or neo-Indian music. Then we got very lucky and Greg Reeves came along, courtesy of Motown.

"Greg's been playing sessions during the last two years. He's only 19 but he's fantastic – he also plays stand-up bass. He's really made the band tighten up."

American reports have hinted that Young's teaming up with Stills isn't a good thing. It's been suggested that the two former Springfield guitarists have too big a talent to combine together well for long. Has Neil's joining created any problems for the growing band?

"You shouldn't believe all you read in the trades, no disrespect to *MM*," said Dave. "Only rarely do Neil and Steve play guitar together and when they do it's interlocking parts.

"The reason for the Springfield falling apart wasn't because of Neil and Steve. They weren't at war at all. Primarily it was because the Springfield couldn't grow to a musical level – the clashes came between everybody else in the group and if you've ever worked with some of them you'd know why."

I asked David if he was worried that they were being talked about as a supergroup. Does the "Supergroup" tag pose any problems?

"It doesn't worry me and it doesn't excite me. People are trying to label everything, it's just a cheap attempt to make us into something we're not. We're just a bunch of musicians playing music.

"Our music is going in every direction that I've been able to figure out. One song comes out like Motown, one comes out South African, one comes out folk and one comes out like a Bulgarian harmony. There's no way I can tell in what direction we're going in – we're going in so many directions at once.

"There's now five writers in the group, can you dig it? It works out with still more material and it's varied. This album we're working on is different from the first, which was mostly overdubbing as it was just the four people. These are tracks played live.

"I resented the change at first because I didn't want to lose that three -part vocal harmony, but it's grown into a fully integrated rock'n'roll band. These guys are fantastic – it's so perfected. I heard them do a song of mine the other night and it was just cooking and bouncing along and you could still hear yourself talk over it. We're doing every kind of arrangement we can think of. Our vocal capacity is really something."

Graham Nash, the ex-Hollie and very much a part of the group's distinctive vocal sound, is suffering from polyps on the vocal chords. How serious is the infection and will he have to have an operation?

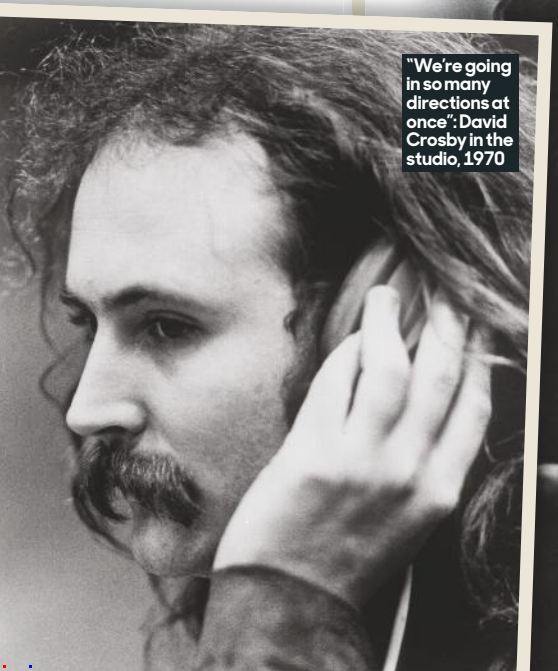
"Well we're keeping our fingers crossed. It's the same thing that affected Stevie Wonder and Grace Slick, which put the Airplane out of business. We hope Graham's going to be able to sing, but we've had to cancel a few dates because the doctors said they wouldn't be able to guarantee those chords. But apart from that Graham's having a whale of a time – he's got his chicks and his music..."

It was a hot sunny Los Angeles day and a dark London night when we talked. "I really envy you; I'd love to be able to go into Chelsea for a meal right now. We nearly came over to England a couple of weeks ago, we really wanted to be there. It's a bit more civilised," said Dave. "We'll see you soon."

ROYSTON ELDRIDGE

> "I envy you; I'd love to be able to go into Chelsea for a meal right now"
> **DAVID CROSBY**

New horizons: Graham Nash



"We're going in so many directions at once": David Crosby in the studio, 1970

MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVE/GETTY; DAVID THORPE/ANL/SHUTTERSTOCK

NME SEPTEMBER 6, 1969

GRAHAM Nash is back. Like the prodigal son of pop, the rebel Hollie who threw away security to go it alone returns to the *NME* chart this week in the company of his good friends David Crosby and Stephen Stills.

The ex-Hollie and the ex-Byrd and the ex-Buffalo Springfield have recorded a Nash original as their first single, "Marrakesh Express", and after a couple of worrying weeks it's chugged its way into the list at No 27.

I first heard this urgent-yet-gentle song performed by the trio in an impromptu performance in their Moscow Road, Bayswater, pad last December – by the light of a gasfire.

A few days later I wrote in the *NME* that "their music is magnificent, their

hopes are high, they know what they're up against, their ideals are ideal, I wish them luck and when they happen (as they will) I trust these rebels with a musical cause will continue to be as individual as they are."

Frankly, the gap between then and now had me worried and I began to think that after struggling to break free, Graham Nash had then gone and thrown the whole thing away. I'm happy to be wrong.

At the time of the Crosby, Stills and Nash formation, he told me: "I've crossed the Atlantic four times just to sing with these people. The affinity between us is a strong one. We don't want to be regarded as a permanent group, though – that'd just brand us."

ALAN SMITH

NME JANUARY 10, 1970

New Musical Express
CLIFF
EL KICKS TRACKS
140 STARS RATINGS '69
¾ OF A MILLION SALES SO FAR.

HAD I interviewed any of The Hollies this year, Graham Nash wanted to know? "Yes, Tony Hicks." "How did you get on?"

"Quite well, I thought. I liked him."

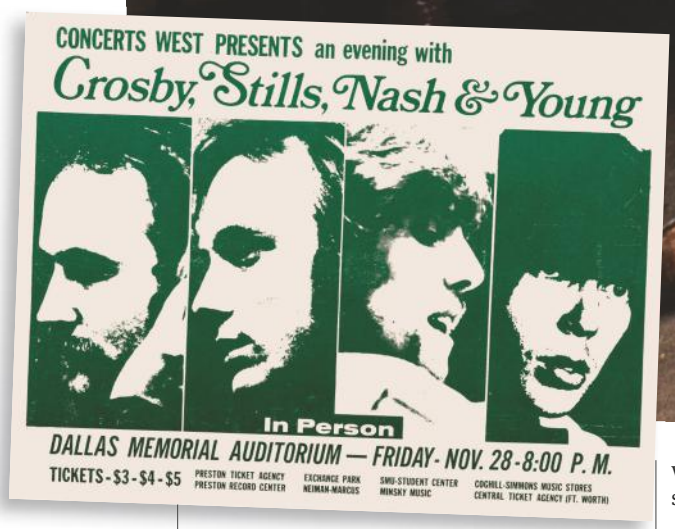
"You should, they're nice people." He said he'd been to see Tony the day before. "It was a bit strange at first, like walking on thin ice, but once we realised we were the same two northern lads who came down from Stockport, everything was OK."

A year since it was not so much formed as drifted together above a Chinese laundry in London's Moscow Road, the Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young Group – now swollen to six with bassist Greg Reeves and drummer Dallas Taylor – is back in the town of its birth. Tuesday saw their first, and only, British concert before a sell-out audience at the Albert Hall. They'd logged up three days in London when I saw them on Friday and were encamped in five flats above a shop near South Kensington tube.

I'd recognised Dave Crosby in the street outside – could it be anyone but him behind that so perfectly trimmed moustache that looks like a prop from a joke Western? – and he led me up to a living room all abuzz with activity. Steve Stills, the fair-haired ex-Buffalo Springfield, whose birthday was the following day, Saturday, sat on the floor proclaiming, "England is the most advanced, cultured country in the world – yet it's so far behind its frightening."

Said Graham Nash, taking a place on the settee: "Every level of my life at the moment is very good and satisfying. The musical level, the financial level – which is important to allow me to pursue the music – and the private level too."

Fireside chat: CSNY (with Dallas Taylor, right) in Kensington, London, January 1970



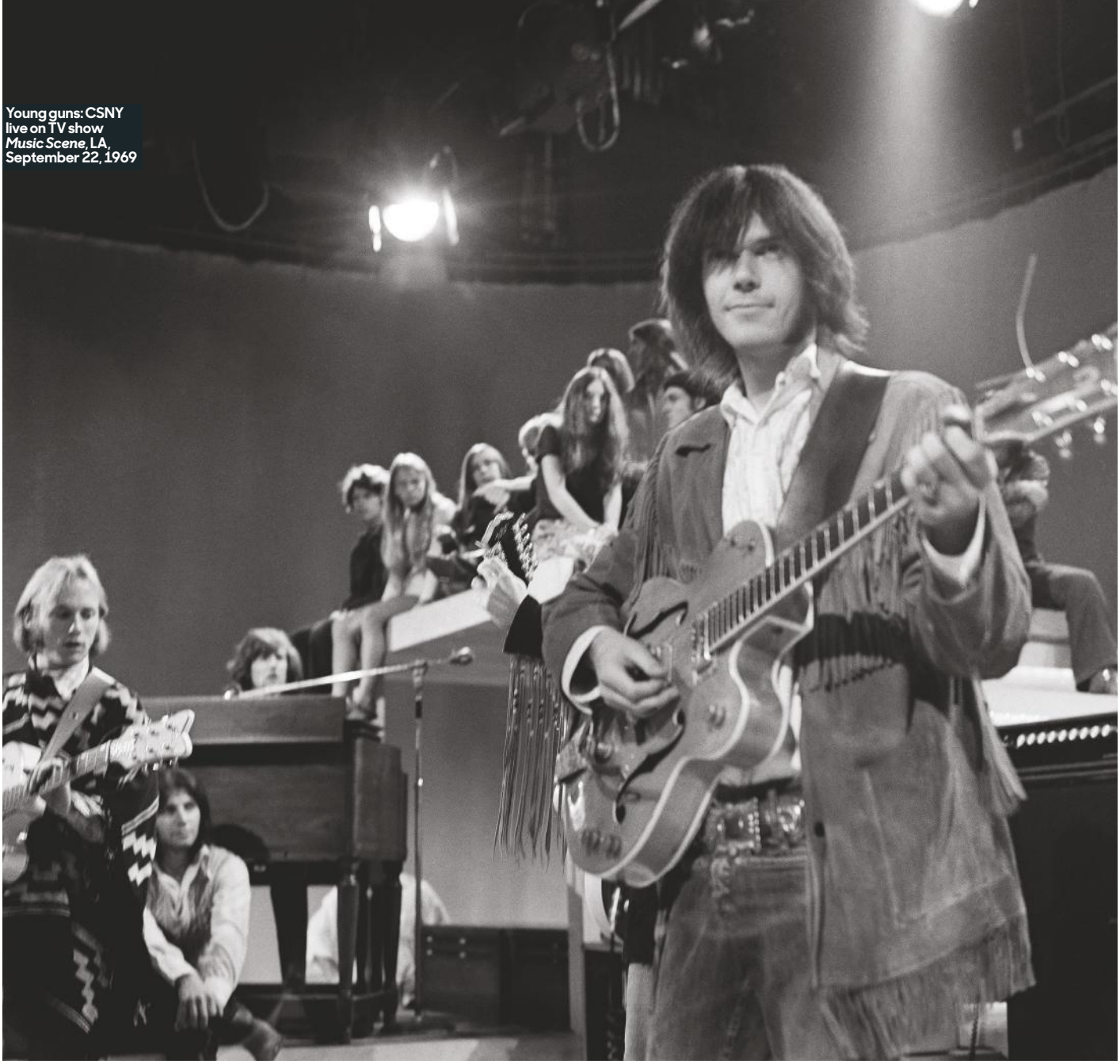
The dapper Mr Crosby expressed a desire for the lady journalist present rather than me, and Graham and I left the seated, talking group for the quieter end of the room. I hadn't met Graham before, but I was struck by the difference between the one I remembered from television images and photographs during Hollies days.

He was much slighter than I expected; his face more gaunt and his hair lighter, possibly due to the sun of his new Californian home. "Do I miss England? Yes, a great deal. There is a beautiful atmosphere in England; I have got a bit paranoid about the police in Los Angeles. Here they are wonderful; I was upset about the two that got shot in Glasgow."

Living in America, he says, has made him more aware of the social ills of the world. "The States seems to be a focal point for what is going down. The situation is right out on the streets there. I used to be really naive about that sort of thing. I wasn't used to watching every passing police car wondering if they were going to stop me; or having the threat of police pulling you out of your bed. All that shocked me; it straightened me out."

But although it's shaken his head, America has failed to penetrate Nash's northern accent nor, according to Dallas Taylor when he came over to join us, his English sense of humour. ➤

ALAMY



Young guns: CSNY live on TV show *Music Scene*, LA, September 22, 1969

MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVE/GETTY

"He has certainly brought some humour into the band," offered Dallas. "The lighter parts of the album are all his. There is not much humour going down in the States among Americans these days."

The humour strain aside, Graham also fills a role as the group's diplomat – valuable carry-over from his days as a Hollie. Says Dave Crosby: "Graham is probably the coolest of all of us and he's dapper and debonair and extremely intelligent... and he fights for us very well. He is able to deal with any level up to and including royalty – which he had done."

"My musical training," says Graham, "is from a different heritage from the others. The effect is to give the group a much wider scope in which to work. When we did the album the others had never worked with an Englishman before. I record in a different way to them but they were willing to listen and watch and I was willing to do the same for them. There is a great openness within the group."

Greg Reeves and Neil Young, a tall, talented Canadian with straight black hair and features that suggest native American blood, are recent additions to the group since the first album.

> "I need badly to make my own music, partly 'cos it boosts my ego"
> **NEIL YOUNG**

"Why? Because we had a lot of electric music we wanted to play on stage. So we found two more brothers," said Graham.

Further talk on those lines was curtailed by Dave Crosby's attention-snatching imitation of a US cop, illustrating a point he was making. "Dave's really rapping hard today," said Graham to Neil, as their partner slipped into the guise of an old lady launching a tirade against long hair. "Dave's got this thing about The Beatles at the moment," Graham continued. "He really wants to see The Beatles performing live again, so at every opportunity he really lays into them and says what a lousy group they are, hoping it will pressure them into playing again." He got up to take a phone call, calling back enthusiastically: "Hey we might be doing a gig in Manchester. Wouldn't that be great?"

I'd had the impression that CSN&Y had been working pretty solidly in the States since their formation but I was assured this wasn't so and in fact they'd done only 15 or so gigs in all.

"It isn't necessary," explained Graham on his return, "because it is impossible for everybody to see us – that's why we make albums."

To date their recording score is just the one album but when they left LA they were within four days of completing their second. Title is *Déjà Vu*, which roughly means a feeling of having been somewhere or done something before.

NICK LOGAN

MELODY MAKER JANUARY 10, 1970

Melody Maker

ISLE OF WIGHT POP SHOW IS ON!

Blood, Sweat and Tears are coming

"DON'T build me up into a pop star. I'm no different from you or anybody else. It's just that, because I'm a musician, I can put music to people's thoughts."

Stephen Stills, talking about his position in society. Like many of his generation

growing up inside the terror of the Great American Dream gone broke, Stills talks music and politico-sociology with equal ease. To him, they're indivisible.

"But music is not the be-all and end-all," he says. "It's a fulcrum around which the movement exists, because it sets people's heads to music and perhaps sometimes says things that they feel inside but can't articulate. It's very scary in the States at the moment. Did you read that that the cops busted into a couple of houses in Chicago and Los Angeles a few days ago and mowed down the Black Panthers? Wow...

"That's why I want to stay in England for a while. It's more... civilised, plus there are a few people I want to play with. I stood up in front of a lot of people during the Vietnam moratorium in San Francisco recently and read a poem. So if there's a list, I'm on it."

Can he see the seeds of an alternative culture emerging in America?

"Yeah, it's going through its birth pains. The young people have got to find a new way to live, and they're getting there, because history shows that no revolution that has come from the people has ever failed, even if it's had to take a couple of generations to get through. Right from the time of Alexander The Great, that's been a fact. Of course, people are in varying stages of preparing for it. The leaders... well, we're not getting quite as high these days."

This situation will be reflected in Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young's first movie, a full feature-length picture to be called *Wooden Ships*, and based loosely on the words of that song from their first album.

"We're getting Theodore Sturgeon to write the screenplay – he's a science-fiction writer and I'm pretty sure that it's suitable for him. That should be ready pretty soon."

Briefly, the story centres round the survivors of a nuclear holocaust, who meet up with a South American tribe (I think) and sail off in wooden ships in search of an uncontaminated area where they can begin to build a new civilisation. Steve says that they're trying to get Stanley Kubrick (of *2001* fame) to direct the film.

"It won't be an Arthur C Clarke screenplay so it won't have the same cold feeling as *2001* – I hope it will be more like Kubrick's earlier films, with the characters laid out so well.

"It's got to be done properly. If it's too serious you blow it, and if it's too funny you blow it. You've got to strike a balance."

Perhaps we in Britain don't realise just how big CSN&Y are in America. They've already done 25 concerts in cities that include Chicago (twice), Houston, New York, Dallas, Los Angeles, Salt Lake City and San Francisco.

"We've averaged 14,000 people a concert," says Steve. "Some of the concerts have been in the open air, in football parks, but we're not doing any more of those. You get so many people there it's ridiculous. That essential intimate feeling is lost in a football park, and we're going to concentrate on playing halls with a capacity between 10 to 14 thousand."

Possibly a large percentage of their success can be ascribed to the variety they project throughout their concerts, with four such diverse talents to call on. "We play for two hours, the first hour acoustic and the second half with electronic equipment. Just as people think they're listening to a folk concert, we plug in and WHAM! We're a rock band!"

When I put forward my pet theory, that country-rock hasn't broken big over here because basically country music is a particularly American form, Steve replied: "Well, it all goes back to Elizabethan music and so forth. It may not have been this year's music, but next year.

"Anyway I couldn't restrict myself to country music, just as I couldn't restrict myself to the blues. I want to be able to cover it all, to play it all, and I don't see why I shouldn't."

RICHARD WILLIAMS

MELODY MAKER JANUARY 10, 1970

Melody Maker

ISLE OF WIGHT POP SHOW IS ON!

Blood, Sweat and Tears are coming

NEIL Young's "Nowadays Clancy Can't Even Sing" was far and away the standout of the otherwise undistinguished first album from the late Buffalo Springfield, and through "Broken Arrow" to "The Old Laughing Lady" one has watched the growth of a very individual talent.

Young, a Canadian whose father is one of his country's most respected political columnists, was a member of the Springfields, that most underrated of groups, which broke up mainly because of the unhealthy atmosphere of competition that existed within the band.

While Steve Stills joined Graham Nash and David Crosby, Neil went deeper into his own music, producing two albums under his own name for Warner/Reprise before becoming the fourth part of Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young.

"I needed that time in-between to get my bearings, to get my head in the right place," he told me. "When the Springfields broke up I felt I couldn't work in a group context – and I certainly never realised I'd be in a group with Steve again, even though I guessed that we'd probably be playing together sometime.

"Now I think I've reached just about the perfect state. I'm part of the group, which I really dig, and I can also express myself as an individual through my own things.

"And I need very badly to make my own music, partly because it boosts my ego to the required dimension."

Neil's first solo album was almost completely ruined by modern technology. The pressing plant at the record company managed, in some mysterious way, to press the record so that the vocals were almost completely lost in the complex textures of the backings.

"I've remixed it and it's being remastered and reissued so that people will be able to hear it properly," he said.

"And I'm working out some sort of deal with the record company so that the people who bought it originally will be able to take it into a record shop and exchange it for a new copy."

"Most certainly. It took me and Jack Nitzsche a month to put down the tracks for 'The Old Laughing Lady'. I write in spasms – I did most of the songs for the second album in one month, and after something like that I won't write anything for weeks and weeks maybe.

"We did a lot of work on the first album – everything was overdubbed to get that breadth of sound.

"But really I like to record naturally. I'd rather put the voice down at the same time as the backing tracks."

Neil is currently working with Crazy Horse, a group formerly called the Rockets, with whom he made his second album, *Everybody Knows This Is Nowhere*, and he is in the process of completing another album with them, which will, he says, contain elements of both previous records.

After this week's concert he flies back to the States to work on the scores for two movies, *The Landlord* and *Strawberry Statement*, both apparently products of Hollywood's new "low budget" thinking.

Neil plans to record at least one of the scores on his new 16-track recording unit, which is currently being installed in his Topanga Canyon home.

His final words: "Listen, if you're ever around LA, come around and hear how that first album's REALLY supposed to sound. It'd knock you out."

I'm certain that Neil Young will continue to knock more and more people out with his unique songs of despair and alienation – and, once in a while, even happiness.

RICHARD WILLIAMS

"Don't build me up into a pop star": Stephen Stills, September 18, 1969

JACK ROBINSON/HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

NME JANUARY 10, 1970

CROSBY, Stills, Nash and Young stole their own show at the Royal Albert Hall on Tuesday night. They could not have been followed without a superhuman effort and were even better than the most fanatical fans thought they would be!

The stage looked like a junior Cape Kennedy with all sorts of projections, booms and 1,250 watts' worth of equipment! The packed hall was crowded with many celebrities present, and backstage everyone was playing it easy.

Then just Crosby, Stills and Nash went on, with Crosby and Stills sitting on stools and playing acoustic guitars while Nash stood slapping his right thigh with the music. All very simple but not at all contrived and really good. "Suite: Judy Blue Eves" received an ovation, then Nash announced: "This is a number that The Beatles wrote. They're the finest group in the world and don't anybody forget it."

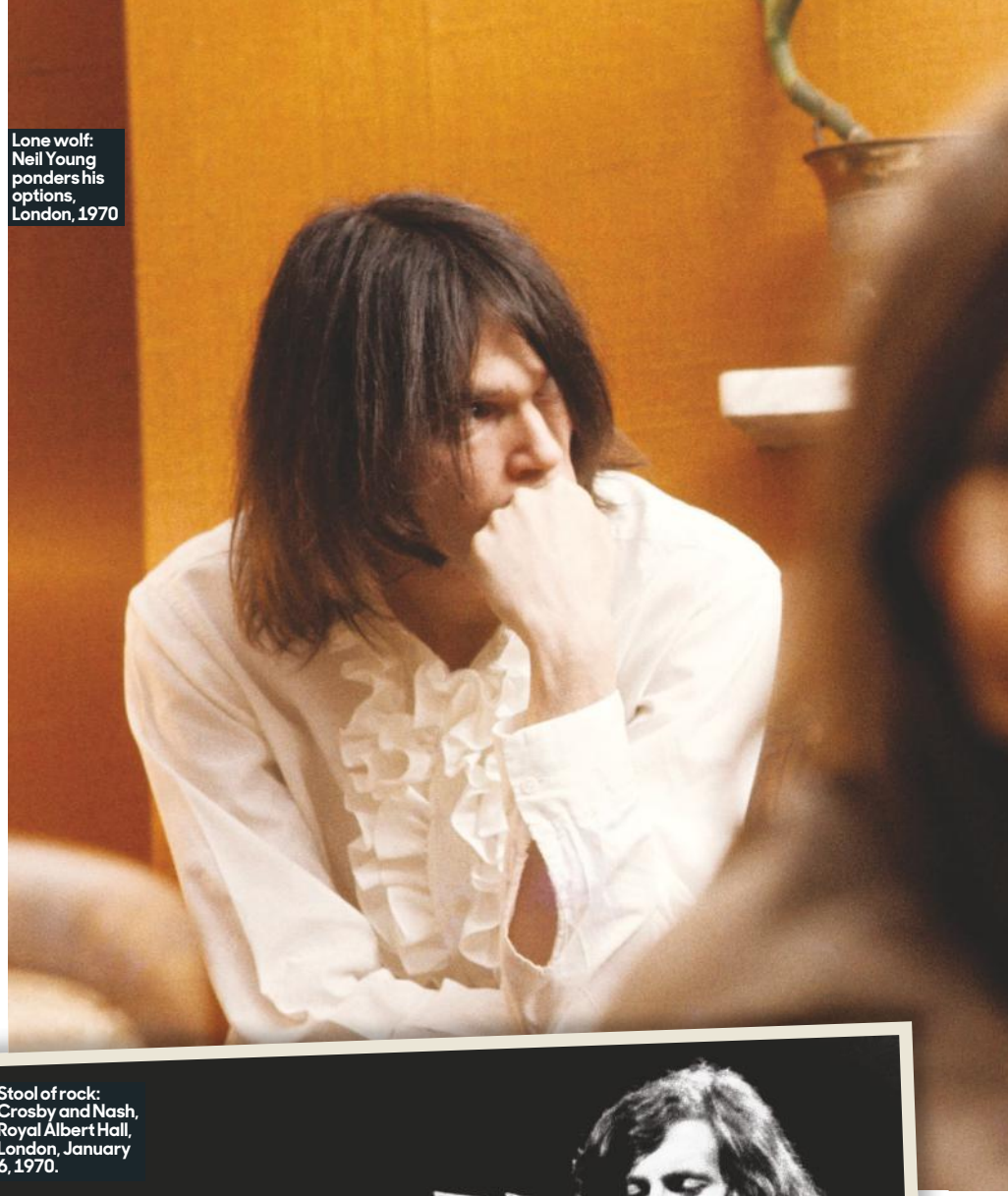
That led into "Blackbird". The way the voices interchanged and harmonised was something I'd personally never heard before. They took it so casually and made such maximum impact it was truly unusual. Young joined on acoustic guitar and for the first time I began to notice Stills' very high voice way above Nash's.

For an acoustic sound this was far and away better than you'd hear in a long day's march. It went like this until the electric side took over with the whole ensemble on stage – Dallas Taylor on drums and young Greg Reeves on bass. It was loud and at times fuzzy, but as interesting and entertaining as the acoustic set.

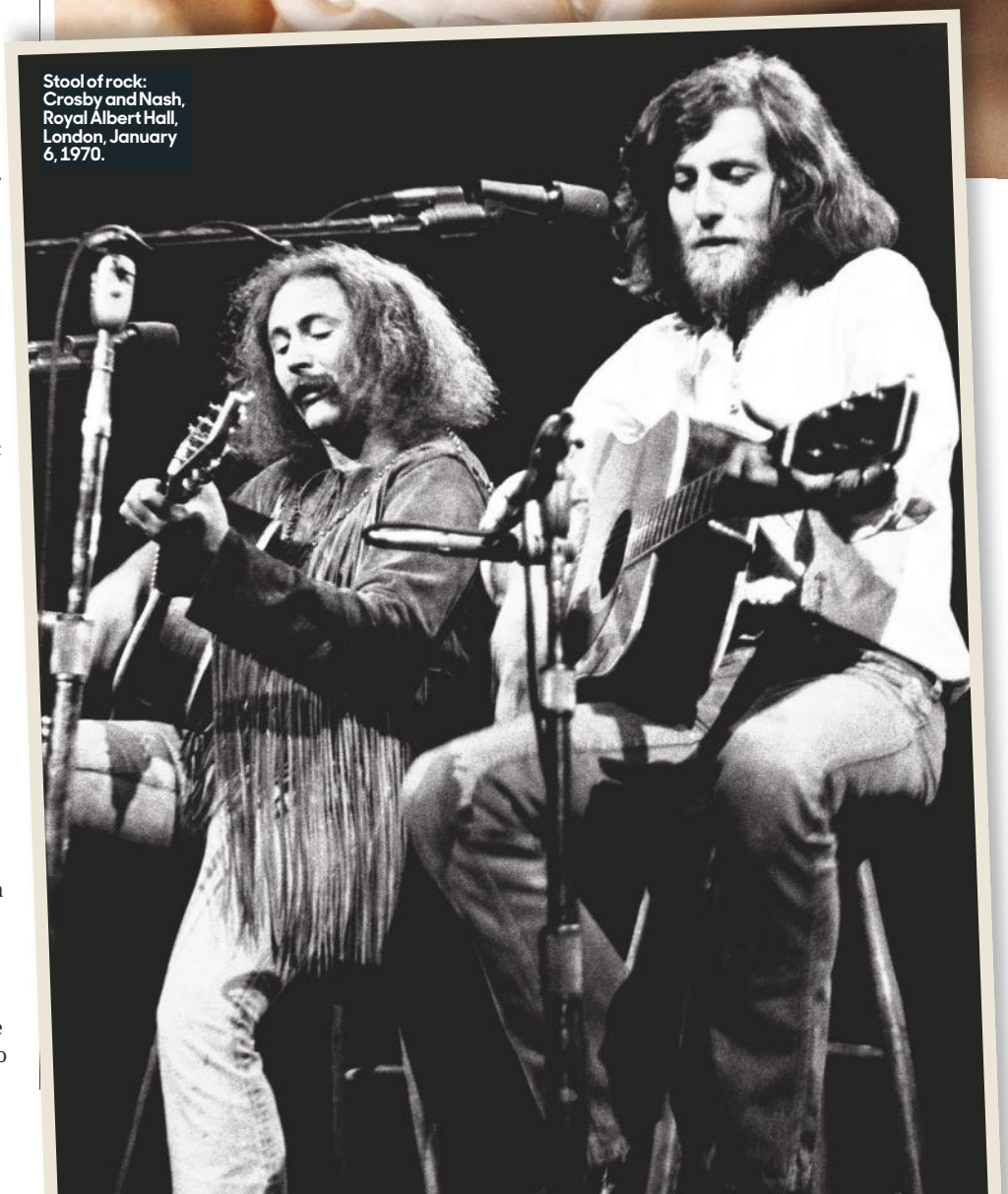
The group seemed to be enjoying themselves and the audience certainly were. The vocal standard persisted and the musicianship came into its own, Reeves being especially good. A great big rock'n'roll set broke out with four guitarists grouped round the drummer. It reached a climax that was as exciting as any achieved by a group.

At the end, almost half the audience was on its feet yelling for more and they got an acoustic encore – Stills' "Find The Cost Of Freedom" – which went down a storm. An outstanding concert by an extremely talented group.

RICHARD GREEN



Lone wolf: Neil Young ponders his options, London, 1970



Stool of rock: Crosby and Nash, Royal Albert Hall, London, January 6, 1970.

MELODY MAKER FEBRUARY 28, 1970

GENIUS, says the old adage, is an infinite capacity for taking pains. If that's so, then Stephen Stills must be pretty close to it.

Because Steve is a very painstaking guy, much more so than the general run of pop musicians, who like to get it down on tape and get off home.

"This approach is the basis of a lot of success," he told me in his London hotel the other day.

"There are people, like the Memphis bands and the Nashville bands, who just do it because they know it all in front. They're past the need to work it all out in detail.

RB/REDFERNS/GETTY; GUS STEWART/REDFERNS/GETTY

"But for me it's very different, and it's a matter of very hard work. Like the guy with Creedence Clearwater, for example – their records sound just like they've cut it quick and split, but he spends hours cutting tiny bits out of 16-track tape where the drummer's been dragging, because he knows that it's the beat that sells his records.

"That's how *Sgt Pepper* was made, and I like to take a lot of time to make sure something's just right. I've got more of a capacity for that than anybody else in our band, and sometimes I stay behind working on the mixes as long as the engineer'll stay with me.

"Our new album, *Déjà Vu*, took weeks to record, in San Francisco and Los Angeles. In San Francisco I'd get up at five in the afternoon, have breakfast, go to the studios and stay there 'til noon the next day, and then go home and collapse. That went on for three weeks.

"Sometimes I have to work to persuade the other guys to do that, too. On one of Dave's songs from the new album, I made him play it over and over again until he was dropping asleep over his guitar – then he played it in time, and that was it... finished as far as the playing went.

"Neil's songs, too, don't sound the same as the stuff he's done on his own. I worked hard at those, because although that album with Crazy Horse was groovy, you can tell it was cut quickly, with not too much time taken over the sweetening.

> "I made Dave play it over and over until he was dropping asleep"
> **STEPHEN STILLS**

"We managed to cut the first album fairly quickly though, in about a month, because it was still a new experience then and everybody was amenable to suggestions and didn't mind working hard at it.

"But something like 'Suite: Judy Blue Eyes' still took a lot of time, because we did all the parts separately and there was a lot of splicing and overdubbing. I spent many hours on the guitar part of 'Marrakesh Express', finding the right harmonies to go along with the lead line on the guitar."

Stills is in England at the moment because the group are having a short break after six months of touring. During this break they are all due to record solo albums, and Stills has found it impossible to get studio time in the States.

"I've been looking around here, and if I can get some time in Island's new studios I'll cut it there. The situation with time in the studios is really ridiculous – all the places I want to work in the States are booked up through the summer, like Wally Heider's. He's got some sort of a deal now with Bones Howe, and Bones gets most of the time at Heider's. This album'll only take me about a month because I've been juggling the ideas around for some time.

"Maybe I'll only need a drummer, and do all the other parts myself, but I know that if I do need somebody else, there're a lot of heavy people around here – like Eric, who'll be back soon."

There's also a chance that Steve might use Ringo Starr on drums, to return the favour that Steve has done him in the past week by playing on Ringo's most recent session.

"That was a gas. There was Ringo, me, George Harrison, and Klaus [*Voormann*], plus George Martin. George said the session was for Ringo's 'surprise single', and I guess that could be right.

"Ringo came in with this little tune – that is, he sat down and played eight bars and said, 'That's it.' So we all made suggestions, like how about adding a bridge here, and playing this little intro, and this little tag, and it came along very nicely. I could see why George Martin has been so important to The Beatles – particularly in the form of the songs, in the more sophisticated elements.

"I thought he was tremendous, and I'd love to have him doing my own album, but I guess I'll use Bill Halverson, because he's so relaxed and he doesn't mind me taking my time.

"I can say to him, 'Look, can you switch track 15 to track 7, mix in tracks 9 and 12, and put the guitar through the board,' and he doesn't turn a hair. He just does it.

"To get back to the session, though, I suggested this thing where we should use a major seventh chord, and it sounded strange at first and the other guys couldn't hear it – but Martin could, and he made another suggestion which made it work perfectly.

"I guess he's had a lot of effect on them, particularly Paul. I started listening to them at the time of *Beatles For Sale* – that's still where I'm at, incidentally, as is everybody else – and maybe at that time they were at their biggest and most isolated, and thus at their closest. So many times John would come in with some intuitive idea for a song, and Paul and George Martin would kick it around, and the finished product would come out really neat.

"The whole scene is getting a lot looser. In a little while there'll be maybe 15 guys who can all play together in any combination, which is a real antidote to staleness. It's not just a question of the same old faces, it'll just be a lot freer and less competitive because whether somebody's better than somebody else doesn't count for anything any more. Competitiveness is what kills music."

Crosby, Stills, Nash, Young, Taylor and Reeves's recent Albert Hall concert came in for some of the most mixed criticism ever received by a rock concert, with no two critics seemingly able to agree. Stills confirmed the impression that the band, too, had mixed feelings.

"That was the first time we've ever really been affected by nerves," he said. "We've played to audiences who've been much more unfriendly at the outset, but they've given ➤

us a standing ovation after the first number.

"At the Albert Hall we felt somehow as if we were on trial, as if they'd come to judge us rather than to enjoy our music. The people in front were friendly, and the people above were friendly, but all around the boxes were full – of bands.

"There's nowhere else in England I'd rather play than there, but people do seem to go to a concert at the Albert Hall in a set frame of mind. Oh, I can't intellectualise about that, I only know what I feel about it.

"We got criticised for spending a long time tuning up, which is partly justified because I like to tune up while I'm playing a little bit of music, so that it doesn't sound unpleasant. But when Neil gets nervous he plays very hard and puts his guitar out of tune and then has to tune it back again." ***RICHARD WILLIAMS***

MELODY MAKER MAY 23, 1970

GRAHAM William Nash and I first met somewhat more than eight years ago, shortly after he and Allan Clarke had ceased to be Ricky and Dane and amalgamated themselves with Tony Hicks, Eric Haydock and Don Rathbone to become The Hollies.

Since then, much water – happy as well as troubled – has flowed under many bridges. But as Willie and I grew older in years and longer in hair, our friendship has grown to the extent that now we are each other's oldest, and only remaining friend from that era.

I visited Willie at his Californian log cabin in Laurel Canyon, LA, a couple of weeks ago, and he remarked on this thus: "Aye, Doog, we've come a long way since Manchester and Glasgow. Who'd have believed it in those days?"

I asked him what were his ambitions in those days, and could he have ever believed that in 1970 he would be one of America's – and the world's – top-paid and most respected musician-singers?

"No man, no way," he replied, still with strong North Manchester overtones in his accent. "All I wanted in those days was to boogie along nicely with my rock'n'roll band, have a few hit records and make a tidy bit of money. I'd never have dreamed that I'd settle down semi-permanently in America."

Then, over cups of tea and honey, we harked back to November of last year, when Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young were playing at San Francisco's Fillmore West. Nash and I were sharing a motel room for the four days the band was in SF. He asked me how were my two children, Christopher and Nikki. We got to talking about how great kids are and wouldn't it be far out if our generation of parents (we're both 28) could really get it together with our children, and learn from both generations' dreams?

Whereupon Willie sat down and wrote out the lyrics of "Teach Your Children" (the original manuscript is reprinted on this page). The following week CSN&Y recorded it for the *Déjà Vu* album and it is the band's current British single.

I told him a fortnight ago that not only did my children like the song, but my parents loved it.

"Far out," he grinned. "Let's hope that lots more people can really dig what the song is all about!"

Nash was looking incredibly fit and well when I saw him. He's really champing at the bit to get back on the road again. Unfortunately, while I was there, Stephen Stills broke his hand in a car crash, and their next tour – which looks like being an all-time record breaker, box-office-wise – had to be postponed by at least three weeks.

Willie's never really been what you could describe as fat, but I didn't realise how thin he is until I noticed his application for a California driver's licence on the table, which lists him as having a mere 130 pounds on his 5ft 11in frame.

I commented on the healthy appearance, and did it have any connection with his recent "Round-America" boat trip?

"Yeah, that was a groove. We sailed David Crosby's yacht from the East Coast round to the West Coast via the Panama Canal, with a basic crew of just David and me, although other people would fly out and join us for a few days at a time. So I had to learn navigation in a hurry. But that was a lot of fun, steering out there with just you and the stars and a compass to guide you. Gives you a whole new perspective on life when you don't see land for days on end."

Moving along from a life on the ocean wave, we got back to the *Déjà Vu* album. Willie asked if any of "the gang" in London had heard it.

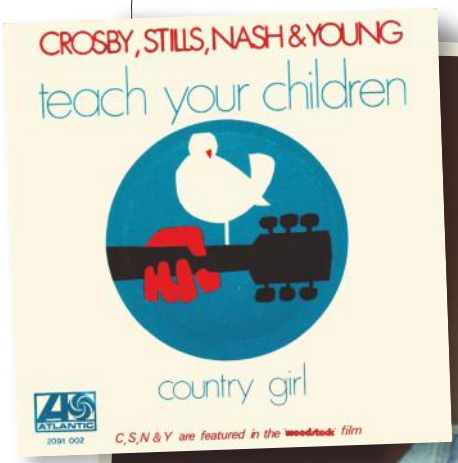
"Yes," says I with pride. "I know that Tony Hicks and Peter Townshend have and they both really adore it. They're happy for you, man, and really dig what you're doing."

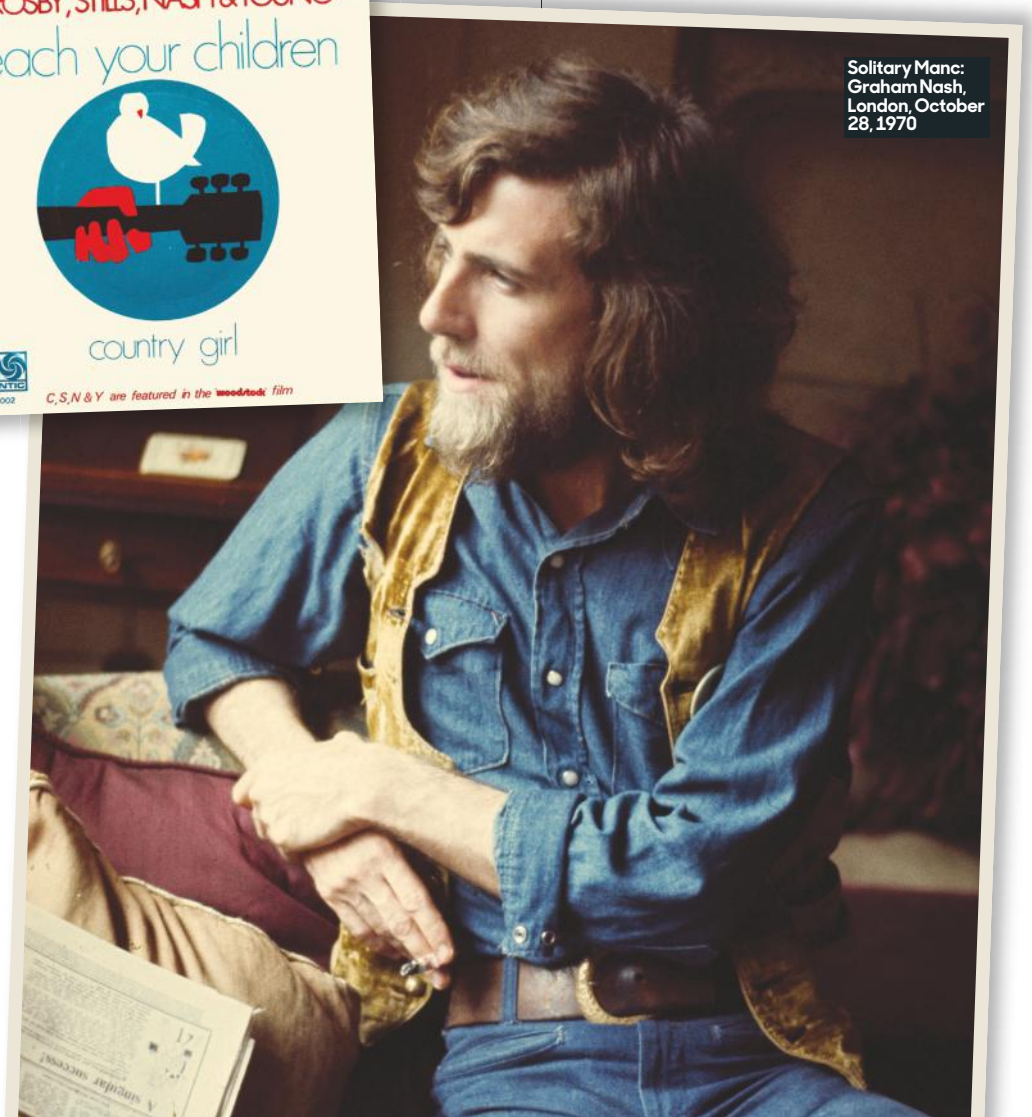
"Right on – great!" he exclaimed, full of enthusiastic happiness. "I'm really pleased about that, because I respect their opinions. By the way, would you like to hear Stephen's solo album. I've just got hold of a tape of it."

I said that I'd heard most of it at some of the final solo Stills sessions in London, but please play it some more, and asked: "What about a solo Nash album?"

"Well, I'm having a whole set of dental sessions first, to get me teeth in good condition. Then we'll be on tour..."

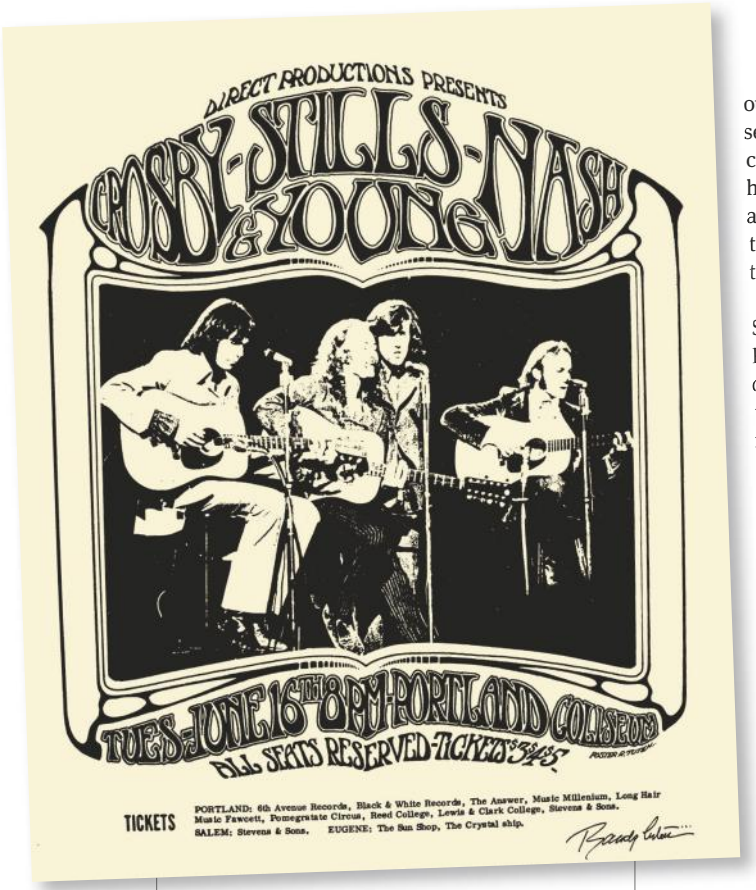
> "I can't believe how easy it is to work with them. There's no doors, man"
>
> **GRAHAM NASH**





Solitary Manc: Graham Nash, London, October 28, 1970

MICHAEL PUTLAND/GETTY



"But I've got two months free in the summer when I'm not doing owt, so David Crosby and I will record a joint album. He wrote a few goodies on the yacht."

Then he sat down at his piano – on which he does most of his composing these days – and played me two songs he'd just written for the album. They're called "I Am Just A Simple Man" and "Go (With My Blessing)". Both very pretty, both pretty wistful. Nice.

Had Nash heard much good music recently? "Yeah, this album of Stephen's. Oh, and the McCartney album. I think it's really great. If you see him, tell him fuck the critics. Not that I suppose he needs me to tell him that! Which reminds me somehow, what's happening with Terry Reid?"

I told Willie that he is getting a new band together at the cottage which he's just bought in Huntingdonshire. Which brought a touch of nostalgia to the proceedings, because he said: "Near Terry's father's house, I know the area very well. Yes, that's what I'm going to do soon – buy a cottage up there, I've not deserted England for ever, you know. I still want a place to come home to."

ALLAN MCDOUGALL

NME NOVEMBER 7, 1970

IT is an autumn afternoon and there is the smell of new paint and the air is hot and dry in the elegant space of the Chelsea apartment block where Mr Graham Nash has taken rooms during his current visit to this country. He peppers his conversation with the perennial clichés of pop – "good vibrations", "groovy, man" – and from time to time the roundness of his Salford accent is no match for the Americanisation of his dialogue.

One knows from his words and music, however, that behind Nash's over-jived pose and prose there is a real human being waiting to get out. And the man who gave us Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young has to be worth listening to. With one exception this is his first return to England in two years... and the fact is that he revels in the changes the months have brought him.

Listen to him talk about the person he's become since those frustrated days with The Hollies; the direction he's headed; and the things that make his music tick...

"I work best in America because I'm surrounded by people who inspire me, man. They're the people with whom I wanna make music. David Crosby has just gone back to New York on some business. We were approached to do a tour together, and maybe we will. Until then – well, I'll just stay here in England till I feel like moving on, I guess.

"An incredible amount has happened to me in two years, man. December 8, 1968, I played with The Hollies, and December 10 I was rehearsin' with David and Stephen. I'm not where I want to be in life, no, I'm never exactly where I want to be. I'm just getting closer. Only for a matter of hours can you experience total happiness – and then it goes away, and you're on a bummer again.

"What I am doing now is what I wanted for The Hollies. This, now, is exactly what I was looking for. And I just can't believe how easy it is to work with the people I'm with. There are just no doors with them, man. You go in the studio and everyone will listen to what everyone else has got to say, and we all build it, and hold it down, and polish it like a jewel.

"With The Hollies I just came across too many psychological doors. They probably won't even understand what I'm saying, but I felt very restricted. I really did, man – although the way we made records was pretty loose. But I just felt restricted. It's not that it came down to people in the end. It was just the preconceptions The Hollies had been conditioned to... their ability to take a look at themselves."

I mentioned the Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young appearance on the recent Tom Jones TV show, and said there were those who thought their involvement somewhat, er, unexpected.

Laughter.

"Are you kiddin'? The opportunity to play up to Tom Jones – how could anybody miss that? I thought it was the funniest thing since Kellogg's. I loved it, man; I mean, that show was so fucking jive that it's incredible. Man, we fucking jumped at the chance. In another respect it was really groovy, though, because I have a tape of the show mixed the way I would have done it. I tell you something, thought – that show was two years old; it was the first TV we did; and we stopped doing television as a direct result."

"How much of my time is spent doing nothing? As much as I can get, man – because when I'm doing nothing, I'm re-energising and devoting time to myself, giving myself the same energy I put into other people." He sits back on the settee, the eyes of his lived-in face closed for a moment, and I asked him about conceit. I tell him that at one time there were those who thought his ego over-dominant. Were they wrong?

"Er, well, my ego was larger then. So how's that for an ego statement? Phew! The fact is that I suddenly discovered I was writing the only music that was turning me on, I guess I just felt I was writing more real songs, and not contrived songs.

"The music that I felt in my head wasn't really getting onto the tape and I was really fucked, because I knew the ability of The Hollies could do it. But the same energy wasn't going in that I was putting in. If it had been, we could have had tapes that were five times as good.

"As far as ego goes, though, every artist needs it. It's the thing that wants to make his art better. There are different levels of ego, anyway – mine is the one that wants me to improve myself."

I asked him how he felt about the current CSN bootleg album, *Wooden Nickel*.

"I'm obviously concerned. It's bad shit they're putting out. If they were putting decent shit out then I wouldn't worry too much. It's all negative, because they're making money for nothing and they'll get what's coming sooner or later."

We talked about Apple...

"The original concept, to help people, that was a fine idea. It's working, too, in that in a sense there are now millions of Apples working all over the place. For instance, there are artistic friends of mine whose art I respect and who I am helping. When I got to New York recently I called my office – and they said that someone on Paul McCartney's behalf had called, so I called him and I spoke to Linda for 10 minutes. Not Paul – just Mrs McCartney!

"I think that what happened with Paul McCartney is what happens with most creators. They try and help worldwide, and then find that's impossible and that they have to go the other way, just to sort themselves out. Most of us are like that. You sort yourself out, and then your foot starts tapping again.

"I find it incredibly easy to love. I love people. I love things. That suit you're wearing now is doing wonderful things for my eyes. As far as loving the ladies go, I can't spend time with ladies who don't make me feel good. And when I commit myself to spending time with one particular lady, she's got to be really special."

Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young's next album will be a double live one, *4 Way Street*, says Nash, and then a series of solo albums will follow. "For my own," he tells me, "I have five basic tracks. Would you like to hear them?"

I say I would, and on the record player he plays five beautiful songs all with an air of melancholy entwined with quiet eroticism. Nash the Man remains, still, a little bumptious around the edges.

But inside his mind there are sensitive images and a fine, consistent talent. And that's what matters. ***ALAN SMITH***

STEPHEN STILLS

Stephen Stills

RELEASED NOVEMBER 16, 1970

The solo diaspora begins. Hendrix, Beatles and old supergroup pals join in on the first from "Captain Manyhands". And what a debut.

BY BUD SCOPPA

STEPHEN Stills had been the grounded centre of Buffalo Springfield, he'd done the heavy lifting on *Crosby, Stills & Nash*, serving as a virtual one-man band, and he'd been the glue that had kept *Déjà Vu* from falling apart. But the multitalented 25-year-old hadn't received the respect he deserved – and craved – for having been the bulwark of these three overlapping supergroups.

That issue was very much on Stills' mind following the splintering of CSNY, as he and his three erstwhile bandmates, following the post-breakup script, headed off to make solo albums. For Stills, the process began with a sojourn in England, where he bought Ringo Starr's Surrey mansion, hung out with his rockstar friends, booked a block of time at Island Studios and brought over his trusted engineer/co-producer, Bill Halverson.

"I have a great affection for this country and its people," Stills said of his motive for crossing the Atlantic to record, adding – ironically, in retrospect – "If anything should ever happen, I reckon Britain would be the only safe, sane place in the world".

The material he'd gathered was wildly diverse, offering him ample opportunity to explore his full stylistic range unfettered by the limitations of working in a band. And that Stills proceeded to do, cutting the basic tracks at Island and doing the overdubs – including the all-star male-female chorales that give the LP its particular character – back in LA at Wally Heider's and the Record Plant.

"Love The One You're With", which opens *Stephen Stills* with a wallop, crams nearly his full range of moves and influences into a taut three-minute cornucopia. The cardiac groove, set up by Stills' Keith Richards-style acoustic rhythm guitar and percolated by his steel drums and Jeff Whittaker's congas, reflects the peripatetic youth of this military man's son, in which he soaked up Latin and Caribbean idioms while his family moved from Texas through Central America before settling in Florida. The delirious melody is carried by Stills' grittily soulful vocal in the verses and lifted heavenward in the choruses by the million-dollar sextet of Crosby, Nash, Rita Coolidge, her sister Priscilla Jones and John Sebastian. The remaining spaces are filled by Stills' surging Hammond organ vamps. A year after the song became a US radio staple, The Isley Brothers doubled down on the gospel root of the original version and made "Love The One You're With" a hit a second time; Aretha had a go as well.

Stills subtly furthers the gospel motif on "Do For The Others" – a far loftier sentiment than that of the previous song – stacking his overdubbed harmonies atop a bank of folky acoustic guitars, before diving deep into Sunday services on "Church (Part Of Someone)", a secular hymn in which he feverishly testifies against the lush backdrop of a full-on choir.

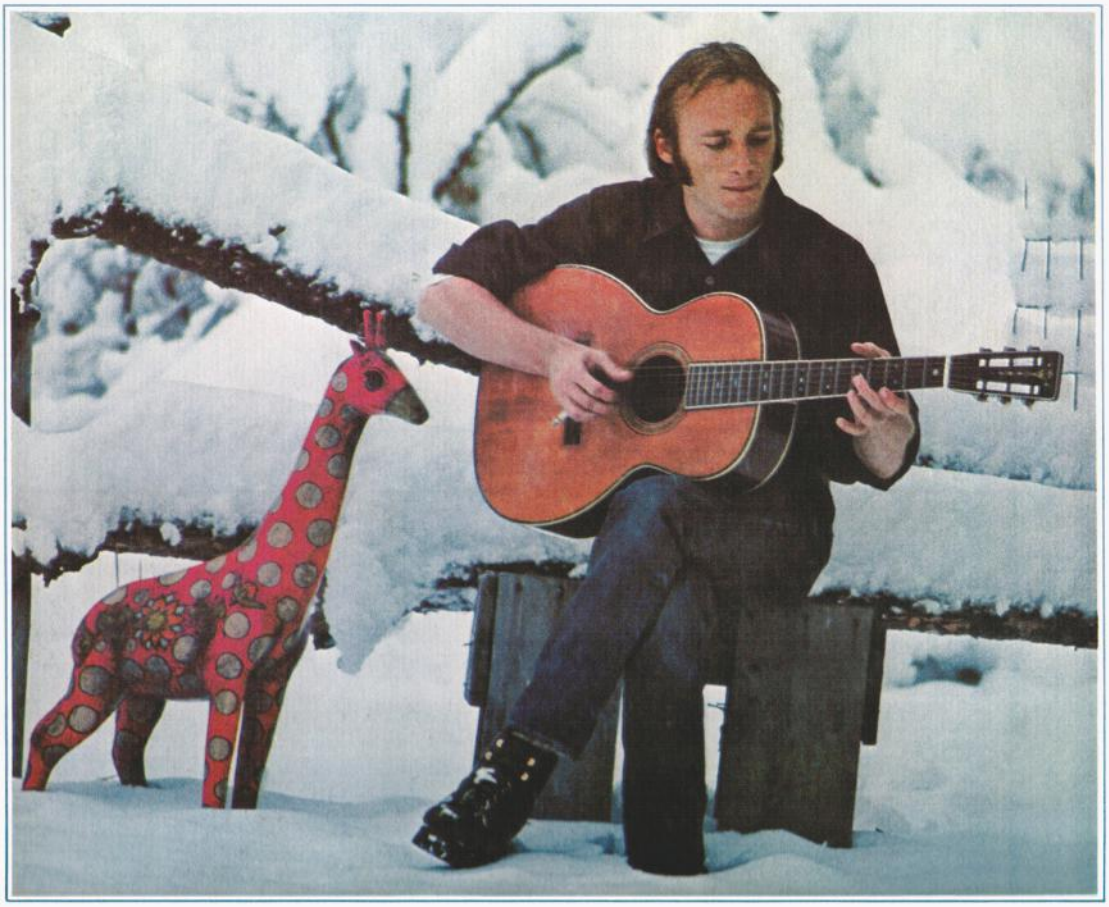
The fireworks begin in earnest with "Old Times Good Times", a gospel-tinged, conga-accented rocker (with Stills once again overdubbing the harmonies) on which he supplies the organ churn while Jimi Hendrix peppers the groove with chattering Stratocaster licks. The performance finds Hendrix playing the role Stills typically assumes in band settings, as he forgoes his signature flash in order to supply what he feels the track requires. "We were going to do an album together," Stills told CSNY biographer Dave Zimmer. "That song 'Old Times Good Times' was the first try at that. After my solo album was turned in, we were going to go back to England and do an album. But... he died." Stills, grief-stricken, dedicated the album to Hendrix.

The next guitar god to pay a visit to the studio was Eric Clapton, during his triumphant but troubled *Layla*... year. Stills has said that it was challenging to get Clapton out of the house, but one day he managed to lure Slowhand into the studio to play on "Go Back Home". Consciously or not, the sultry groove and Stills' ascending vocal line in the verses echo the sylvan funk of Traffic's "Pearly Queen" from 1968, while his establishing guitar part resembles the atmospheric Firebird flares that lit up CSN's

CRITICS' VERDICTS

"'Love The One You're With' and 'Sit Yourself Down' are both comfortable and smooth-harmonied songs which might have come from *Déjà Vu*. 'Church (Part Of Someone)' is a stretched, subdued gospel song, maybe the best he's ever written, with thick choral responses (I'd dig to hear Lorraine Ellisson singing it)." **Richard Williams, MM, 05/12/1970**

STEPHEN STILLS



TRACK MARKS

1. Love The One You're With ★★★★★
2. Do For The Others ★★★
3. Church (Part Of Someone) ★★★★
4. Old Times Good Times ★★★★
5. Go Back Home ★★★★★
6. Sit Yourself Down ★★★★
7. To A Flame ★★★★★
8. Black Queen ★★★
9. Cherokee ★★★★
10. We Are Not Helpless ★★★★

Label: Atlantic
Recorded at: Island Studios, London; Wally Heider Studios and the Record Plant, LA
Produced by: Stephen Stills and Bill Halverson
Personnel includes: Stephen Stills (vocals, guitars, bass, piano, organ, percussion, electric sitar, horn and string arrangements), Calvin "Fuzzy" Samuels (bass), Conrad Isidore, Johnny Barbata, Ringo Starr and Dallas Taylor (drums), Jeff Whittaker (congas), Jimi Hendrix and Eric Clapton (electric guitar), Booker T Jones (organ, backing vocals), Sidney George (flute, alto sax), Arif Mardin (string arrangements)
Highest chart position: UK 8; US 3

"Wooden Ships". Clapton holds back until the three-and-a-half-minute mark, then unleashes an extended molten solo, transforming the track into a wah-wah summit meeting.

If arranged differently, "Sit Yourself Down" would've fit right into the CSN folk-rock pocket, but with Cass Elliott, Claudia Lennear, Coolidge, Jones and Sebastian joining Crosby and Nash on backing vocals over a piano-driven rhythm section while Stills solos ecstatically, the song advances and deepens the album's churchy vibe.

"Black Queen", an intensely performed solo acoustic homage to Stills' first love, the Delta blues, begins a three-song autobiographical section triggered by his memories of playing his dad's records on the family Victrola during his formative years. "To A Flame", completely unprecedented in the Stills oeuvre, is a spot-on evocation of Tin Pan Alley balladry, sung with nuanced languor against the backdrop of Atlantic jazz specialist Arif Mardin's silken string section. And "Cherokee", its lyric inspired by his breakup with Coolidge, alternates between a hard-blowing big band horn section with Stills riffing over the top on electric sitar, and a jazzy reverie that anticipates the feel of the reconfigured Traffic, with Sidney George on flute and sax and Booker T Jones manning the Hammond.

> It's an inventive solo debut, remarkably varied but still consistent

The track is held together by CSNY drummer Dallas Taylor, who nimbly negotiates the track's shifting time signatures.

On the closing "We Are Not Helpless", Stills breaks out some unabashed '60s hippie idealism ("*We, your children, we would ask you all/Please do not hide your eyes/And listen when we call*") amid sawing strings and regal brass. In mid-song, this opulent anthem breaks into glorious double-time revival-meeting rave-up, delivered by a nine-voiced ensemble of the LP's backing vocalists and topped by Stills' crosshatched guitar line alongside one of his most powerful lead vocals. The track then slows again, building toward a massive final chorus, its grandeur heightened by a signature Ringo Starr drum fill.

Stephen Stills is an inventive solo debut, remarkably varied but still consistent, courtesy of the artist/producer's laser in-studio focus and his rarefied musical sophistication. Nonetheless, its myriad sparkling facets were overlooked by many of the reviewers of the day; by that point, the backlash was in full swing (full disclosure: I was part of it) because of his perceived arrogance and fat-cat superstar status – they knew how much he desired the appreciation his work deserved, and they weren't about to give it to him.

The fact that Stills' solo career went downhill from there, his crown stolen by Neil Young, only reinforced the critical consensus. But a reconsideration by modern-day listeners, whose ears haven't been clogged by bias, has moved Stills' first LP closer to the exalted status of Crosby and Young's own landmarks in the CSNY canon, each captivating in its own entirely original way. ●

DAVID CROSBY

If I Could Only Remember My Name

RELEASED FEBRUARY 22, 1971

The freak flag flies half mast. Crosby enlists friends to weave a dreamlike elegy for irrevocably changed times.

BY PAUL MOODY

BY 1971, the hippie dream of August 1969's Woodstock festival – scene of Crosby, Stills & Nash's second ever performance – had been traded for a nightmarish new reality.

Jimi Hendrix and Janis Joplin – two of its star performers – were dead, and a series of grisly events – the Manson murders, the San Francisco Zodiac Killer, the horrors of Altamont – had sent Laurel Canyon's rock royalty into a tailspin, abandoning utopian ideals of peace and love for gated communities and extra security details.

For David Crosby – who with his flowing mane and mile-wide anti-authoritarian streak was effectively a one-man recruitment drive for the counterculture – there had been a personal tragedy, too.

On 30 September 1969, the same day that Crosby, Stills & Nash's debut album went gold, his girlfriend Christine Hinton borrowed the star's VW van to take her two cats to the vet. En route, one of the cats jumped into Christine's lap, causing her to lose control of the vehicle, which swerved into the path of a school bus, killing her instantly. "I watched a part of David die that day," his bandmate Graham Nash later wrote. "He wondered aloud what the universe was doing to him."

After sessions for CSN&Y's second album, *Déjà Vu*, had been concluded, Crosby decided to try to find out. Booking out the upstairs room at Wally Heider's studio on Hyde Street in San Francisco for three months in November 1970, he channelled his grief into his music, spending any downtime in a dope-fuelled haze on his boat, The Mayan, in Sausalito, or hiking to nearby Mount Tamalpais where he would sit for hours looking out to sea, wracked with tears.

Out of these emotional ruins came the spun gold of *If I Could Only Remember My Name*. Over the course of nine dreamlike songs, Crosby lays himself bare, exploring themes of resignation and loss in a series of deeply spiritual, trance-like invocations with the emotional power of folk, the imagination of jazz and the scope of classical music.

Such alchemy couldn't be achieved alone. While the days would be spent in an existential funk, in the evening his spirits would be raised by the arrival of a who's who of the West Coast music scene. With the Grateful Dead's Jerry Garcia as ringleader, the all-star ensemble – including Neil Young, Graham Nash, Joni Mitchell and various members of the Grateful Dead, Jefferson Airplane and Santana – worked late into the night, providing a musical support system, adding new dimensions to Crosby's boundary-pushing ideas.

"I think some of the finest playing I've done on record is on his solo album," Garcia later recalled. "He's gotten better out of me than I get out of myself."

Powerful mantra-like opener "Music Is Love" – a collaboration with Nash and Young – establishes this communal feel before Crosby pours his frustrations into brooding, eight-minute epic "Cowboy Movie". The thinly veiled story of CSNY's fractious internal politics – brought to a head by the rivalry between Nash and Stills over Rita Coolidge ("*the sweet little Indian girl*") – its ragged feel reflects Crosby's unravelling state of mind. "*Now I'm dying here in Albuquerque,*" he rasps in the final verse.

CRITICS' VERDICTS

"Good on yer, Dave; you're doing what you want to... But you and your mates are in danger of boring the pants off us, so why not jump on that big boat of yours and take a vacation... say a year, maybe a couple?" **Richard Williams, MM, 17/04/1971**

"It may not have the immediacy of the Stills and Young collages, but it emits a slowly rotating charisma of sustained calm and peacefulness." **Roy Carr, NME, 03/04/1971**

TRACK MARKS

1. Music Is Love ★★★★
2. Cowboy Movie ★★★★
3. Tamalpais High (At About 3) ★★★
4. Laughing ★★★★★
5. What Are Their Names ★★★★
6. Traction In The Rain ★★★★
7. Song With No Words (Tree With No Leaves) ★★★★
8. Orleans ★★★
9. I'd Swear There Was Somebody There ★★★

Label: Atlantic
Produced by: David Crosby
Recorded at: Wally Heider's, San Francisco
Personnel: David Crosby (vocals, guitar), Graham Nash (guitar, backing vocals), Neil Young (guitar, backing vocals, bass vibraphone, congas), Joni Mitchell (backing vocals), Jerry Garcia (electric guitar, pedal steel), Paul Kantner (backing vocals)
Highest chart position: UK – ; US 12

"*I must be the sorriest sight you ever saw.*"

A wordless "Tamalpais High" re-establishes the dreamlike mood, before "Laughing", which sends *If I Could*... into the stratosphere. Written while Crosby was still in The Byrds, its massed harmonies and Jerry Garcia's pedal steel guitar evoke an otherworldly sadness on an epic scale – the sound Jimi Hendrix once described, when speaking of CSNY, as "western sky music".

If a haunting "What Are Their Names" finds Crosby turning his rage on the political class, who rule with "*such a thoughtless hand*", "Traction In The Rain" provides the counterpoint. Contrasting the anti-hippie abuse Crosby experienced while walking in the park with fellow trailblazers Joni Mitchell and Joan Baez with a liquid accompaniment of harp and acoustic guitars, its mood of resignation suggests Crosby is grieving for both Hinton and the hippie ideals of Woodstock. "*The dove's lady was the cause/ Or maybe it was the olive branch she held in her claws,*" he sighs, the freak flag-flying idealism of "Almost Cut My Hair" traded for the world-weary admission: "*It's hard to find a way/To get through another city day.*"

The reflective mood continues with "Song With No Words (Tree With No Leaves)". A musical cousin of "Guinnevere", its near six-minute duration finds him abandoning pop structures, scatting wordless melodies with Nash, seemingly on a quest to find a meaning beyond language. This sentiment is taken to its logical conclusion on the final two tracks. Recorded alone, "Orleans" finds Crosby layering his vocals to create a ghostly choir, adding an Appalachian chill to the medieval French folk song.

> Crosby lays himself bare, exploring themes of resignation and loss

Weirder still is final track "I'd Swear There Was Somebody Here". Inspired by American flautist Paul Horn's *Inside* – recorded in the dome of the Taj Mahal – Crosby delivers a wordless elegy for Christine, using his vocal chords to convey the pain and anguish he was going through.

"I was sitting there, kind of goofing around," he later said of this voyage into his own grief. "And then all of a sudden I wasn't goofing around."

After three months in the studio, Crosby knew that the music he'd recorded, a deeply complex rumination on both the disintegration of his personal life and the failure of the peace movement to achieve its aims (Nixon, then riding high in the polls, would be re-elected the next year), had a raw emotional power. However, he was also aware that it might not make pleasant listening for anyone else, referring to it prior to release as "David Crosby's bummer". Over time, though, he came to recognise that this musical dark night of the soul had a magic all of its own.

"I was in a very strange state," the singer later recalled. "I had songs, good songs, and we had just finished *Déjà Vu*, and my girlfriend had been killed. But there's a lot of joy on that record, because that's where I needed desperately to go."

For Crosby, the road would get much darker before it would get lighter. Grief-stricken and depressed, he was at the beginning of a downward spiral that would consume the next two decades – a solo follow-up wouldn't arrive until 18 years later. In these 37 transcendent minutes of musical catharsis, however, he had achieved immortality. ●

CROSBY STILLS NASH & YOUNG

4 Way Street

RELEASED APRIL 7, 1971

Drugs, egos, interventions – backstage, the CSNY 1970 tour was a crossroads pileup. On record, the quartet are no less emotional but somehow hold it together.

BY JON DALE

THOUGH it was always said to be a "loose organisation" (source of quotation: Neil Young), CSNY was always a little more uptight than that makes them sound. In the nearly 50 years since, it has become a given that this was a band that thrived on the push and pull of group and solo activity; the creative tension between its different sounds and personalities. It was only really with the arrival of *4 Way Street*, however, that we gained insight into how this tension could weaken as well as embolden and electrify their music.

Released in spring 1971 but recorded during the band's second US tour in summer 1970, this was a live double album with plenty worth recording offstage as well as on it. In the run-up to the tour recordings the band sacked *Déjà Vu* bass player Greg Reeves reportedly because his playing was becoming erratic (he had also decided he was an Apache witch doctor, which may have contributed to his dismissal). When they eventually made it onto the bus, things only got weirder among the players. In Denver, Young, Nash and Crosby decided they weren't going to work with Stills, mounting an intervention and threatening to cancel the tour.

The following shows, in Chicago, were called off – "sore throats" the official explanation – while the likely consequences of their recent decisions (legal drama; huge financial loss; dissolution of the group) were gently explained to the band members by their management team. Duly wised-up, the band attempted to pull themselves together and get back on the road again. Unable to sack Stills, the other members of the band instead were placated by sacking his lieutenant, drummer Dallas Taylor.

As a metaphor for the band's volatile combination of considered harmony on the one hand and spontaneous tumult on the other, *4 Way Street* (one half acoustic; one half electric) is pretty exceptional. It's true, some of the banter can sound a little stoned, the harmonies a bit off, and the playing clearly didn't always satisfy the perfectionism of the group (the album begins, oddly, with a severely truncated "Suite: Judy Blue Eyes"), but there is still playing of great sensitivity here. "Teach Your Children" ("Everybody sing with us!") shows the band's occasional schmaltzy side, but the Crosby interlude of "Triad" and "The Lee Shore" locate tranquillity in a crowded room. "We write about what happens to us," he says as he begins.

He wasn't being disingenuous: amid this tumult, "Ohio" had arrived. Shocked and moved by the shootings at the Kent State University campus on May 4, 1970, Young wrote a biting protest song, which CSNY hustled to record in the immediate aftermath of the drama at the Denver show. Rush-released (pulling the scheduled issue of Nash's "Our House"), it would come to serve as an anti-anthem: the kind of masterpiece someone would prefer not to have written. Perhaps CSNY's most lasting musical moment, it's a fierce, unadorned recording, and the best capture of their awkward dynamic, the way their angst and complex emotions towards each other could turn on a dime and produce great, profound art.

CRITICS' VERDICTS

"This is the most worthwhile acquisition. If only for the fact that Neil Young dominates the proceedings to the extent that he almost re-routes the traffic to make it into a one-way street." Roy Carr, NME, 24/04/1971

"*4 Way Street* is the perfect title for the first official CSNY live album, a double set that lets their singular personalitiies shine through rather than their collective music making." Mark Plummer, MM, 01/04/1971

TRACK MARKS

1. Suite: Judy Blue Eyes ★★★
2. On The Way Home ★★★★
3. Teach Your Children ★★★
4. Triad ★★★
5. The Lee Shore ★★★★
6. Chicago ★★★
7. Right Between The Eyes ★★★
8. Cowgirl In The Sand ★★★★★
9. Don't Let It Bring You Down ★★★★★
10. 49 Bye-Byes/ America's Children ★★★
11. Love The One You're With ★★★
12. Pre-Road Downs ★★★
13. Long Time Gone ★★★
14. Southern Man ★★★★★
15. Ohio ★★★★★
16. Carry On ★★★
17. Find The Cost Of Freedom ★★★★

Label: Atlantic
Produced by: David Crosby, Stephen Stills, Graham Nash, Neil Young
Recorded at: Fillmore East, New York; The Forum, Los Angeles; Auditorium Theatre, Chicago
Personnel: David Crosby (guitar, vocals), Stephen Stills (guitar, piano, organ, vocals), Graham Nash (guitar, piano, organ, vocals), Neil Young (guitar, vocals), Calvin "Fuzzy" Samuels (bass), Johnny Barbata (drums)
Highest chart position: US 1; UK 5

"Ohio" was a temporary unifying force for CSNY, and they sound rejuvenated and uplifted by the recording. On the electric half of the record, "Ohio" is a little ragged and over-vocalised by Stills, keen to foreground his backing vocals, but underlines the dramatic contribution made to the quality of the album by Neil Young.

Young's songs are the most potent in this context, but the difference here is that they growl and glower thanks to the quartet's interplay. "Southern Man", in particular, is a startling performance, a 13-minute epic with Stills and Young trading off each other, each winding and weaving around the other before a split-second flick of the wrist sends shards of vicious tone scything across the stage. Finishing with an acoustic "Find The Cost Of Freedom" ("Ohio"'s B-side, Stills' hymnal ode to those lost to war), *4 Way Street* leaves questions hanging in the air – and leaves us with a ragged, but somehow just right, document of what happens when a working group of four great artists spiral into and out of each other's orbit.

Throughout the tour, drama had simmered backstage. Hearing that Dylan was in the house, Stills stretched out his solo mini-set when playing at the Fillmore East in June, and a tense backstage moment ensued between he and Nash. Stills' cocaine and alcohol problems didn't assist group unity, and he was fired after an early July show in Chicago – only to again be quickly drawn back into the group. He and his three warring bandmates finished up the tour in Bloomington, Minnesota, on July 9. All things considered, it seemed a pretty desultory ending.

> Some of the banter can sound a little stoned, the harmonies a bit off...

On several levels, CSNY found it hard to patch things up. As regards *4 Way Street*, opinion was split on whether to fix the shonkier performances with overdubs (Nash/Stills) or leave well alone, and go warts and all (Crosby/Young). So together, but so opposed that it would take a few years for wounds to heal and the quartet to get back together again, though they turned up in each other's lives, and on each other's records, in intervening years.

In the second half of 1970, though, in the immediate aftermath of an exhausting, dramatic tour, they all returned to their own worlds. Reflecting on that tour, Stills said, as quoted in David Browne's book on CSNY, "We got through it OK. We weren't very good, though. We were real sloppy... I remember thinking, 'This is almost right, but nobody's finishing anything.' It never had that craftsmanship quality."

What Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young would do, individually, over the next few decades tells us all we need to know about who relished that "craftsmanship" – and who wanted to ride the darker wave. ●

GRAHAM NASH

Songs For Beginners

RELEASED MAY 28, 1971

Heartbreak, protest, and nothing in between. An inspired solo debut illuminates the two sides of Nash.

BY ERIN OSMON

GRAHAM NASH AND Joni Mitchell broke up in 1970, and the next year he made a record about it, flecked with songs of protest. *Songs For Beginners* is a compelling display of Graham Nash's personal binary, which swings from love to social unrest, and stops nowhere in between.

Released in May of 1971, it was one of four solo efforts, one from each CSNY member, recorded in the wake of the commercial success of *Déjà Vu*, and it's a critical statement of purpose. The "Teach Your Children" author had always written in favour of what would best serve a group, and general audience, an ethos evident from Nash's work with The Hollies. Songs like "Carrie Anne" and "On A Carousel" are early examples of Nash's talent for hooks laden with vocal harmony, pop songs that were lyrically innocuous. It was a signature that translated well to CSN's self-titled solo debut and *Déjà Vu*, though dusted with palatable counter-cultural overtones. *Songs For Beginners*, though, is Nash's first cogent statement of self, and it endures as one of the strongest of CSNY's collected solo works to date.

It begins with a wallop. "Military Madness" is a sunny, digestible pop number infused with undisguised dissent. It opens with an autobiographical account of Nash's birth in the midst of World War II. "*In an upstairs room in Blackpool/By the side of a northern sea/The army had my father/And my mother was having me,*" he sings over jaunty acoustic guitar strumming and piano. Lead guitar work by Traffic's Dave Mason speaks to both the sound of the era and of the ebb and flow of voices in protest. Mason's burbles and screeches decorate a swift lyrical punch. "*Military madness is killing your country/So much sadness, between you and me,*" Nash insists over a chorus of haunted backing vocals by PP Arnold and Rita Coolidge. By the new millennium, "Military Madness" was embraced by the American underground, covered by bands like Death Cab for Cutie and Woods. It endures as one of the decade's most palatable and enduring musical revolts.

CRITICS' VERDICTS

"At no time are the tracks over-embellished or drawn out... self-control has been observed and artistic discretion maintained." **Roy Carr, NME, 05/06/1971**

"It follows the same steps as Nash's songs on the CSNY albums and the material is of the same basic pattern, but it loses a lot without Crosby to arrange those beautiful harmonies." **Mark Plummer, MM, 12/06/1971**

Graham's second indelible protest made it to the charts. Nash wrote "Chicago" in reaction to the violence that occurred during the 1968 Democratic National Convention. "*So your brother's bound and gagged/And they've chained him to a chair,*" he sings over a funeral organ in reference to Bobby Seale, the only African-American defendant of the Chicago Eight, who were charged by the federal government with conspiring to incite riots during the convention. Invited by Hugh Romney to perform at a benefit concert, Nash appeals to his group to participate and to the people of the world to heal it. "*We can change the world/Rearrange the world/It's dying to get better,*" he pleads over a gospel chorus, ringing of hippie idealism and racial unity.

Nash and the gospel ensemble sing this same refrain in the last track, titled "We Can Change The World". For one minute and seven seconds they jam out on the phrase and sentiment, underscoring its importance in the album's greater message and in Nash's personal mission. Though *Songs For Beginners* is lined with heartache, with this outro Nash seems to present a self-awareness about its importance in the greater landscape of personal struggle.

Throughout *Songs For Beginners*, Nash marries his feelings of social and political unrest with heartache. "Wounded Bird" offers consolation to a heartbroken Stephen Stills; "Better Days" is a soulful pep talk in the wake of a lover's exit, which concludes with a melancholic saxophone solo by Rolling Stones blower Bobby Keys. Standout "I Used To

TRACK MARKS

1. Military Madness ★★★★★
2. Better Days ★★★★★
3. Wounded Bird ★★★★
4. I Used To Be A King ★★★★★
5. Be Yourself ★★★★★
6. Simple Man ★★★★★
7. Man In The Mirror ★★★★★
8. There's Only One ★★★★★
9. Sleep Song ★★★★
10. Chicago ★★★★★
11. We Can Change The World ★★★★

Produced By: Graham Nash
Recorded At: Wally Heider's, Los Angeles; CBS Studios, San Francisco
Personnel Includes: Graham Nash (vocals, guitar), David Crosby (vocals, guitar), Phil Lesh (bass), Jerry Garcia (guitar), Rita Coolidge (vocals), Neil Young (as "Joe Yankee" – guitar, piano, harmonica), Dave Mason and David Lindley (guitar), Clydie King, Dorothy Morrison, Vanetta Fields and Shirley Matthews (vocals), Calvin Samuels, Chris Ethridge (bass), PP Arnold (vocals) and Bobby Keys (saxophone)
Highest chart position: UK 13; US 15

Be A King" acts as a shuffling lament that chronicles the decline of a man who had it all until his love departed. Jerry Garcia's pedal steel work is a lugubrious constant as Nash's emotional crescendo hits the chorus: "*Someone is going to take my heart/But no-one is going to take my heart again.*"

What's so special about this vulnerable posture is that it's matched by the closeness of Nash's voice, which is plain and imperfect compared with the smooth harmonies of CSN. The little flaws and evidence of a fading Lancastrian accent make the experience all the more personal, belying the star-studded cast and writ-large production. This is especially so on "Simple Man", a solemn piano ballad proclaiming, "*I just want to hold you/I don't want to hold you down,*" over gentle taps of minor chords.

"There's Only One" ups the ante, Nash's voice soaring and powerful over ringing major chords, soulful backing vocals and rumbling bass and drums. A grandiose and somewhat oblique manifesto against social inequality, the song is another entry in the canon of Nash as moral safeguard. Though not as enduring as "Military Madness" or "Chicago", it rings of those songs' truth.

> A great listen, its elegant simplicity recalls the best of the era's pop singles

The final love song on the album is perhaps its only weak point, *Songs For Beginners* at its most syrupy and mawkish. "Sleep Song" harnesses the plainspoken white-boy heartache of emo before emo existed. Over feather-light acoustic strumming and violin whispers, Nash recounts a morning in bed with his lover, drifting off to sleep. While the musical construction of the song is fine if not terribly remarkable, his pillow talk of removing clothes and kissing foreheads is gently nauseating, and a salient reminder of the power of metaphor.

Taken as a whole, *Songs For Beginners* provides the ultimate early-'70s experience in both song and spirit. Not only is it a great listen, its elegant simplicity recalls the best of the era's pop singles. It also represents a heroic pivot point for Graham Nash, from chronicler of the bucolic Laurel Canyon landscapes of "Our House" to moral gatekeeper fuelled by political unrest. And the love songs are mostly gorgeous, and never less than entirely honest.

Songs For Beginners, a series of lyrical time capsules that live on through timeless songcraft, peaked at No 15 on the Billboard pop charts in 1971, and "Chicago" remains Nash's highest-charting solo single. The record endures as a gentle yet potent tour of Nash's musical point of view, with its glorious, soulful harmonies and subtle layers of instrumentation. But it's also a testament to the quests for love and justice that have preoccupied him for the last 50 years. ●

"It's very doubtful the four of them will record together..."

As STEVE STILLS leaves the fold, manager DAVID GEFFEN details the power struggles, touring hassles and "Frozen Smiles" that divide the new fab four. "They clash a lot," he tells Roy Carr, "but they complement each other."

NME JULY 22, 1972

COLONEL Tom Parker was the prototype of the definitive starmaker, the first public figure to partly transform the image of the man with the straw hat and fat cigar into that of a manager who really cared about the welfare of his talented chargeling.

Since then, the rock industry has spasmodically produced starmakers whose names are synonymous with the artists they guide to fame. The late Brian Epstein and The Beatles; Andrew Loog Oldham and The Rolling Stones; Peter Grant and Led Zeppelin; on a totally different level, Terry Knight and Grand Funk Railroad.

To this list can be added David Geffen and Elliot Roberts, who between them have skilfully guided the careers of Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young, Joni Mitchell, Laura Nyro, America and others.

Currently in London on business, 29-year-old David Geffen admits that he has a reputation for toughness, though not in the sense of duffing up his clients or occasionally their critics. Geffen is a businessman who won't settle for anything but the best.

He admits: "It isn't my job to be popular except to those people I work for. Elliot and I are hired by these people to protect them from all those people who would try and rip them off, bring them down or attack them. We are supposed to be tough and we are. It's easy to be popular in the music business: just say yes all the time."

"Managers don't make stars," he points out, "music makes stars. Managers are like baby doctors in that they help the artist to deliver. There's no such thing as instant success, and ➤

RB/GETTY

Hide the roaches!: CSNY in the studio before Stephen Stills' departure, 1970

18+

WHAT IS AVAXHOME?

AVAXHOME-

the biggest Internet portal, providing you various content: brand new books, trending movies, fresh magazines, hot games, recent software, latest music releases.

Unlimited satisfaction one low price
Cheap constant access to piping hot media
Protect your downloadings from Big brother
Safer, than torrent-trackers

18 years of seamless operation and our users' satisfaction

All languages
Brand new content
One site

AVXLIVE.ICU

AvaxHome - Your End Place

We have everything for all of your needs. Just open https://avxlive.icu

Managing expectations: David Geffen in London, July 20, 1972

I know that more than anyone 'cause I've had to hustle hard for all my clients."

CARR: What are the major difficulties in managing such contrasting personalities as Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young?

GEFFEN: Oh God... Probably that Elliot [*Roberts*] and I don't have enough time. It's very difficult. Even though they are a group, they are also four individuals very different from each other. The only thing that they have in common is that they are musicians – and that's about it.

For instance, Graham is very laid back... an extremely quiet and modest gentleman.

Then there's Stephen, who as you know, is not particularly modest about anything.

Neil is very shy and not interested in all the big pop-star bullshit. He's content to live out on his farm near San Francisco where he has his studio, write songs or raise horses and cattle.

In fact, Neil has just finished a fantastic movie which will be out in the fall. It's called *Journey Through The Past*. He's very talented, a totally artistic person.

Then we have David, who is quite a mixer... a revolutionary type individual.

Do the four personalities clash a great deal?

I would say they clash a lot, but I would point out that they complement each other. Together they made some terrific music, and apart they also made some terrific music. But together it was something else.

So what are the prospects of the four collaborating on another album?

Well, probably three of them will, because Graham, David and Neil are still very good friends. They see each other a lot and, whenever possible, help each other with their records. No doubt they will eventually get around to making an album together.

However, I have a feeling that it's very doubtful the four of them together will record. It's possible, but doubtful.

So what's happened to make you say that?

[*Pauses for some time before answering*] Stephen's off on his own thing... You see, the first major break came during the last tour. I've read all kinds of interviews with Stephen in the English trades and his versions of how it all happened.

Actually, what happened was that Stephen kinda thought it was his band, while all the others thought that they were pretty equal. In order for a band to stay together, they've got to have a certain amount of unity... one for all and all for one.

> "What happened was that Stephen kinda thought it was his band"
>
> **DAVID GEFFEN**

Three of them felt this way, but Stephen thought it was his thing. It was obvious it couldn't last like that.

Was it perhaps a feeling that there was insufficient freedom for each individual?

They'd always agreed they were all going to do separate albums while they were doing group albums.

Neil made three solo albums while still with the group; Stephen was in the midst of recording his first solo album while the group was still together, and both David and Graham had plans to cut their first solo efforts.

So that wasn't the reason for the break-up of the group?

There's a song on David and Graham's new album called "Frozen Smiles", which is something Graham wrote for Stephen, and is a certain indication as to why they're not together any longer.

There is a consensus of opinion in the rock press that once an act is represented by Geffen-Roberts management, they automatically become unavailable for interviews. Would you comment on this?

Well let's put it this way. We're very protective about our clients... we don't believe in hype. When you say they become unavailable to the press, you've got to realise that there are managers who push their clients into doing all kinds of things.

Like they encourage them to do lots of tours, make lots of records and give lots of interviews. We don't. It's our belief that an artist should make as many records as they are comfortable with – like one album a year – keep the quality high and the frequency low.

An artist shouldn't work too much, because the more you're on the road the less you're able to be in touch with yourself. We're more interested in an artist remaining creative than in generating huge fortunes of money.

Don't you feel an artist owes a certain amount of press coverage to the people who've bought their records?

As you well know, a lot of the trouble is that many interviews come out in a different context to how an artist meant it to sound.

I agree, but surely you can pick writers whose integrity and approach you respect?

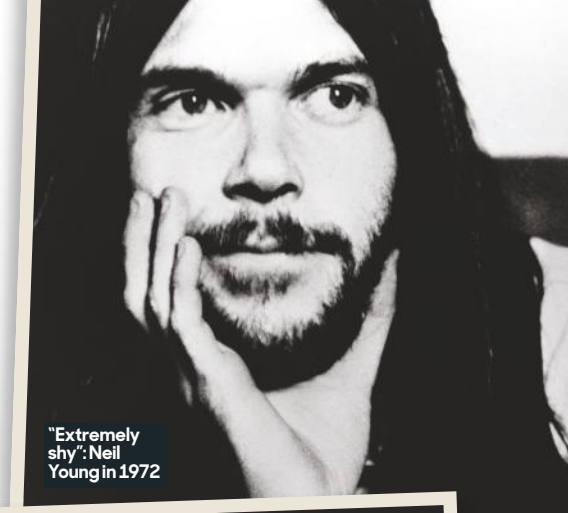
It's not always the case that we don't want an artist to do an interview. The fact is, a lot of our artists are very quiet or shy. For instance, Neil Young is extremely shy... he's an introverted person, very sensitive.

Isn't it possible for an artist to cut himself off to the point where it becomes harmful to his career?

Yes, I think that's quite possible. In order for an artist to write things that are vital, you have to be part of what's going on.

Brian Wilson locked himself away in his house for so long he ended up just writing songs about vegetables. Yes, it can be very dangerous.

MICHAEL PUTLAND/GETTY


"Extremely shy": Neil Young in 1972

Flying solo: Stephen Stills

Don't you feel that due to Neil Young's image of being an acute introvert he could suddenly find himself in just that position?
I don't think that's the case with Neil. Starting in January he's going on a world tour, and he's not doing it 'cause he needs the money. As a matter of fact the tickets on this tour are going to be very low-priced. In America, there will be a five-dollar top, hopefully less than that.

Actually, what Neil wanted to do was a free concert in Hyde Park, but the way in which the tour has been routed, the weather wouldn't be favourable for such a gig.

Ticket prices will be a lot less than for acts less important than Neil.

The main reason I hear for artists cutting down on tours is the numerous hassles they encounter on the road.
That's correct. You have to leave your home and spend every day travelling from one strange hotel room to another.

With Neil it's extremely hard, because he's a very big star and therefore has no privacy. To the extent that it's hard for him to just walk in the streets without having people coming up to him taking photographs and annoying him.

At this time, his wife is pregnant and he's very protective about that, and therefore it makes things even harder.

On the other hand, David and Graham live in San Francisco and they always seem to be around doing benefits, rallies, and things like that. Everyone comes from a different place and therefore fulfils their needs in different ways.

How much direct influence do you and Elliot have on the musical policy of an artist?
As far as the music itself is concerned, we don't get involved. After all, they are the musicians and it would be presumptuous for us to try and tell them what to do.

How we get involved is in trying to guide their respective careers so they have the time to write, keep their heads together... so that they don't blow it.

We're very protective in that we make sure their records and tours are handled just right and in a way that will be beneficial.

How would you react if, say, Neil Young played you the tapes of a new album and you realised that it fell below his accepted standard. Would you tell him so?
Yes. I think Neil depends on the fact that both Elliot and I are completely honest with both him and everyone else.

There's very little paranoia between our clients and ourselves, because we've always been very honest with them. We have no contracts with them. If they're not happy with us they are free to leave.

Do you mean that you have no written agreement with artists you represent?
We have no written contracts with any of our clients. The fact that we have chosen to do this has eliminated so much paranoia and given us the opportunity to be completely honest with them.

We're not at all worried that an act is going to leave us. We do a very good job for our clients... We work very hard for them.

They've all become very successful with us, extremely wealthy and no one has beaten them or tried to take unfair advantage of them. It's very much a family scene, we're all very close.

What was your initial reaction when you heard America?
My first reaction was: "My God, there's this group that sounds like Neil Young." I heard "A Horse With No Name" on the radio and thought: "What is that?"

How did Neil Young react?
Neil felt that here was this group imitating his sound. But that's not true, for if you know Dewey, then you know that's what he sounds like... He sounds like Neil, but that's the only similarity.

I'll tell you, Neil doesn't feel paranoid or uptight about America. In fact, when America approached Elliot and I to manage them, we called up Neil and said: "Listen, America wants us to manage them." To which he replied: "You're kidding... how funny, so what are you going to do?"

We told Neil that if he objected we wouldn't carry the matter any further. He said he didn't object and in fact expressed a desire to meet them, to the point of inviting them up to his ranch.

As a matter of fact they met all of Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young – and all of them like America. The first thing David said to them was: "I like your records very much." And America replied: "Thank you, we like your records as well," and David immediately quipped: "That's obvious." As they are older than America, Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young almost feel paternal.

There's a feeling in the industry that you've only taken on management of America in order to have control over the competitive threat they may have towards your other artists.
That's ridiculous. America's ➤

Two's company: Nash and Crosby chat before a show in Copenhagen, Denmark, September 25, 1976

ALAMY; MICHAEL PUTLAND/GETTY; JORGEN ANGEL/GETTY

not competition for Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young. First of all, we didn't take America, they begged us to take them on.

They called us, flew to the States, moved there to be with us – because they were very unhappy with their past management. They felt so paranoid about the way in which they were being handled that they couldn't create.

They are very nice, very young and brand new. In many ways they are infants, and what they are doing now is not nearly as productive, to what they can be doing in five years.

The fact that you have no written agreements surely places you in the somewhat precarious position of possibly being left holding the baby?

That's one of the chances you take. For instance, we've already invested $100,000 in the Eagles... It hasn't cost them a single penny.

There's always one thing you can count on, and that's at one point or another, groups do break up. We do everything possible to keep our acts together. We try to keep them happy, healthy, protected, see that they have sufficient money and a certain amount of peace of mind, and hope that it will stay together. If a group breaks up, it breaks up.

What about the adverse criticism that greeted CSN&Y's "Ohio" and Neil and Graham's current single "War Song"?

"Ohio" was banned by a lot of radio stations and "War Song" has been banned by even more stations. "War Song" was recorded by Neil and Graham as a personal contribution to Senator McGovern, who we all feel very forcibly about as a very strong hope for change in America.

That record was a gift. They [*Neil and Graham*] make no money from it – everything has been donated to McGovern. It was done as a magnanimous gesture. A lot of stations won't play it because they're afraid. But others are playing it.

Apart from the difficulties you can expect to encounter when putting out such records, I feel that if someone feels prone towards making a statement, then they should make their statement.

Have you encountered any direct pressures from official sources?

Absolutely none. David Crosby insists that he does, but I think it's more paranoia than anything else. I mean David has said some of the most outrageous things in concert about Nixon, but I don't think Nixon cares very much... He probably doesn't know who David Crosby is.

Do you worry when you see one of your artists – Stephen Stills, for instance – doing things which you consider damaging to his career?

Absolutely. At times it becomes very hard to watch. Stephen and I have been together for many years. I'm very fond of him and wish him only the best. When I see Stephen doing things that I think are wrong... I tell him so and he doesn't listen. That's the time when we have to come to a parting of the ways.

I certainly am not going to be a part of somebody ruining their career or doing those things that I think are tragically wrong things. The only reason for staying involved in a situation like that is that you might hang on to the bread, and I don't.

Now you've set up Asylum Records, is it your intention to eventually get all your artists to place their product with you in the same way that Joni Mitchell has?

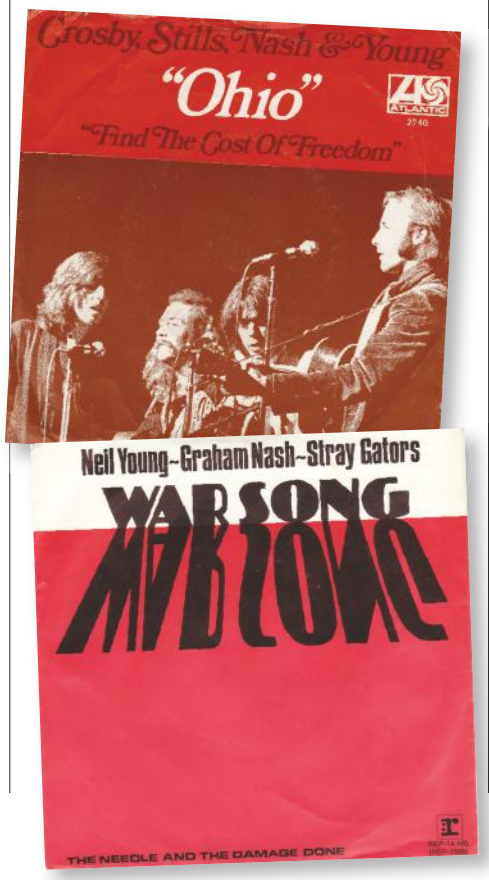
I'll put it this way. If they want to record for Asylum Records I would love to have them, but if they would prefer to stay with Atlantic, Reprise or Warner Brothers, then they are free to do so.

> "I don't think Nixon cares. He doesn't know who David Crosby is"
>
> **DAVID GEFFEN**

There is no obligation on anybody's part to record for Asylum... Asylum is a very good record company, and if they want to be there, great. So too are Warner Brothers, Atlantic and Reprise. We have no problems dealing with any of these labels, for I feel that the Kinney group is the finest group of record companies in the world.

Most of your artists have been extensively bootlegged. Has this affected official record sales?

No. But bootlegs affect the artist, because they are not up to the quality these artists would like to have, and they don't get any money from them.



After all, you write for a living and if someone took your articles and reprinted them in another paper and didn't pay you, I guess you'd be pissed off. Especially if you're in the middle of a conversation somewhere and there's somebody sitting next to you there with a cassette recorder. Then you have a right to feel annoyed.

What are the major obstacles you encounter in your professional role?

Elliot and I try to avoid those things that will complicate an artist's life and work against them being creative. We also want to help young new artists... That's the thing we enjoy most.

America have been the only act that were already super-successful before we managed them. Everybody else was relatively unknown and it's been a joy to watch them grow. At the moment, we are getting the same thrill from seeing the Eagles, Jackson Browne, Jo Jo Gunne, Judee Sill happen.

With each new act, does it become less of a personal challenge?

No, not at all, it's always hard. It's as hard to do it with Jackson Browne as it was to do it with Joni Mitchell five years ago. The trouble is that so few people want to give new things a chance, but the fun is in discovering new talent and helping them make it.

What qualifications do you look for in an act before you will represent them?

Well, as you can imagine we get approached by a lot of successful acts because they are having managerial difficulties. The thing is that we've got to like them, because a manager-artist relationship should be a very close personal thing, and if you don't get on together at this level then there's going to be no fun in doing it. As it was no longer fun with Stephen Stills.

I'd like to make one thing clear – we don't pursue artists who already have managers, because we respect a relationship that an artist has with his manager. I mean, America came to us. We didn't go to them.

If an exceptionally successful act came to you for management and you didn't like their music, would you represent them? For an example, let's take Grand Funk Railroad.

I wouldn't manage Grand Funk Railroad for all the money in the world. I don't like their music and there's no way that I could feel honest in trying to sell them to anybody.

Even if I liked them personally, in their particular case I certainly could not be their manager, or manager for any other act who turn me off as much as they do musically. I would feel like the world's worst hypocrite.

What are your feelings about groups who prefer to handle their own management?

I think it's very dumb for a group to handle its own business, for at some point or other it must interfere with the music. The Beatles were the greatest group in the world, four people and Brian Epstein who was part of it all.

Then sadly he dies and they hire Allen Klein and the whole thing falls apart, which has never ceased to amaze me. Obviously they must think he's a great manager. To me a manager is someone who keeps it all going. ●

SUBSCRIBE TO UNCUT FROM ONLY £21.99!

GREAT SAVINGS

- NEVER MISS AN ISSUE
- DELIVERED DIRECT TO YOUR HOME
- FREE CD EVERY MONTH

SUBSCRIBE ONLINE AT

magazines.bandlabtechnologies.com/19AC

Or call 01371 851882 and quote code 19AC

LINES ARE OPEN MONDAY - FRIDAY 9AM-5.30PM

Direct Debit offer is available to UK subscribers only and closes October 31, 2019. £21.99 payable by six monthly Direct Debit.
This price is guaranteed for the first 12 months and we will notify you in advance of any price changes. Please allow up to six weeks for delivery of your first subscription issue.
The full subscription rate is for 12 months (12 issues) and includes postage and packaging. If the magazine ordered changes frequency per annum, we will honour the number of issues paid for, not the term of the subscription. For enquiries please call: 01371 851882 or e-mail: support@uncut.co.uk.

STEPHEN STILLS

Stephen Stills in the 1970s

RELEASED 1971-1978

Change partners! The stimulated Stills storms the '70s with new players and unerring brilliance. Until he doesn't.

BY NIGEL WILLIAMSON

THERE are hot streaks – and there's Stephen Stills in the early 1970s, fuelled by a potent cocktail of talent, ambition, ego, drink and drugs.

While making CSN's debut album, Stills' colleagues had admiringly dubbed him "Captain Manyhands" for the way he took charge, but it wasn't long before his action-man persona was seriously pissing them off. During CSNY's 1970 tour, things fell apart badly. Graham Nash characterised Stills as a "preposterous monster dominating force", while in his parable "Cowboy Movie", David Crosby portrayed him as "*our fastest gunner... kinda mean and young and from the South*".

Stills countered that his domineering was "just trying to act like a pro" and dismissed his colleagues as "fat, rich and lazy stars, filled with an inflated self-image". Peace and love, man.

If Stills was hard on his colleagues, however, he put himself under even more intense pressure. Although he embraced the excesses of the superstar life with an unbridled enthusiasm, there was also a puritanical streak in Stills, characterised by a relentless work ethic, a serious, almost pedantic musicianship and a compulsive dedication to his art that bordered on the obsessive.

At one point while making the first Manassas album, he put in an unbroken stint of 106 hours in the studio. On another occasion, engineer Ron Albert reported that he'd just got to bed after a marathon session lasting 84 hours when the phone rang. It was Stills summoning him back to the studio with the words: "I know you're tired, but there's this idea I've got for this song that I want to get on tape before I forget it..."

Release mechanisms ranged from the chemical (he was busted on a swathe of possession charges between his first and second solo albums) to the liquid (bottles of Jose Cuervo), the mineral (rock climbing in the Colorado mountains) and, above all, the equestrian (training and riding horses). "The thing about horses is that they demand your attention, so you have to forget about whatever else is going on in your life," he said. He reckoned his two thoroughbreds – which he named Major Change and Crazy Horse – were the only things that kept him "from going off the deep end".

Yet whether on horseback or on the hooch, Stills hit a creative peak between 1970–1972 when his whirlwind, force-of-nature personality was at the heart of four classic studio albums. *Déjà Vu* and his stellar solo debut are dealt with at length elsewhere, so let us pick up the narrative in early 1971 with the recording of his second solo album, *Stephen Stills 2*.

With CSNY "still scatterbrained", as Stills put it, and the chances of them sharing a stage together any time soon nonexistent, Ahmet Ertegun suggested he should get away from the West Coast psychodrama and booked him into Criteria Studios in Miami. His solo debut had only been in the stores a few weeks; yet typically he already had 23 songs slated for the follow-up.

Just as characteristically, he turned up for his first session at 2am on the very night he landed in town. "We didn't know he was coming and we were in the middle of making a Johnny Winter album," engineer Howard Albert recalled. "Lucky there were two of us, 'cos Stephen wanted to start right away."

The marathon all-night sessions continued over the next three months. Jerry Garcia, whom Stills flew in for a week to play pedal steel on "Change Partners", recalled that he employed two teams of studio engineers working shifts around the clock in order to keep up with him. "I went down there and did sessions at the weirdest hours," Garcia recalled. "The way he worked in the studio was totally crazy, but at the time he was really happening. He just accumulated endless tracks."

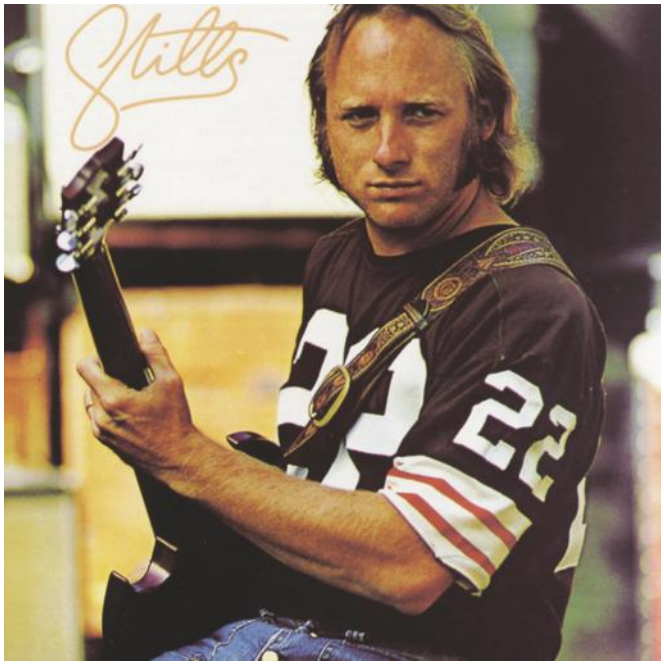
Although he recorded enough material for a double album. Atlantic baulked at the idea and a 12-track single disc was released in June 1971, just as Stills was embarking on his first ever solo tour, accompanied by the Memphis Horns and two- ➤

CRITICS' VERDICTS

STEPHEN STILLS 2
"The heartfelt plea to know the reason for the pain in 'Open Secret', among the set's best tracks, saves itself from tumbling into a self-pitying abyss because the '*pain*' is not specified but is universal." **Nick Logan, NME, 24/07/1971**

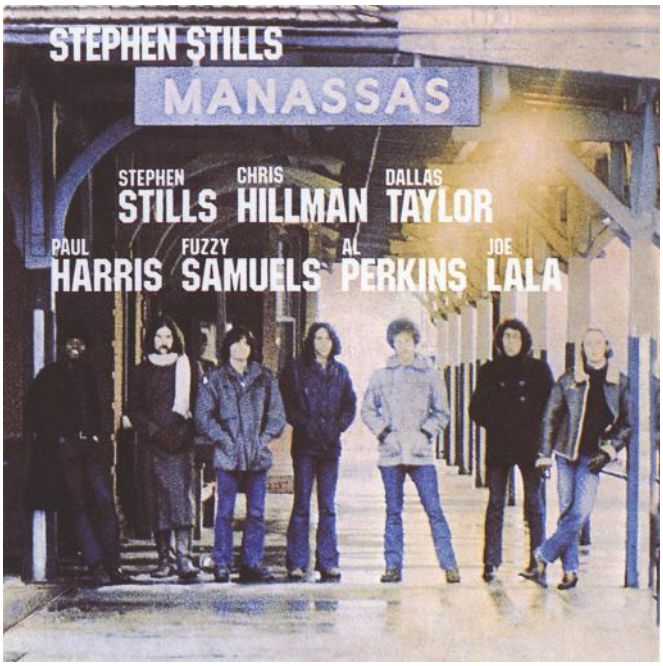
MANASSAS
"The blues, soul, rock and country music are all the influences. They play them like the Grateful Dead, with a sincerity and ability that one does not always detect in the work of those exclusively involved in the original idiom." **Chris Welch, MM, 29/04/1972**

STEPHEN STILLS 2


Stills

ILLEGAL STILLS
A STRONG BLEND
HILL COUNTRY'S BEST
OUR FOUNDER
Bottled in Jars
RECORDED IN THE ROCKIES
33⅓ PROOF

STEPHEN STILLS · THOROUGHFARE GAP


STEPHEN STILLS
MANASSAS
STEPHEN STILLS
CHRIS HILLMAN
DALLAS TAYLOR
PAUL HARRIS
FUZZY SAMUELS
AL PERKINS
JOE LALA

STEPHEN STILLS
CHRIS HILLMAN
JOE LALA
AL PERKINS
MANASSAS
DALLAS TAYLOR
FUZZY SAMUEL
PAUL HARRIS
DOWN THE ROAD

Stills at the mansion he bought from Ringo Starr, Brookfield House in Elstead, Surrey, June 1972

thirds of the band that would soon become Manassas.

Broken romance always brought out the best in Stills' songwriting. After losing Judy Collins, it was Rita Coolidge, snatched away from him by Nash, who was breaking his heart on *Stephen Stills 2* – and the result was one of the most soulful records he ever made.

"Change Partners", buoyed by Garcia's glorious pedal steel, is a gem that references Coolidge and CSNY as the "*four more young men who were waiting in the colour and noise*". "Sugar Babe" is another cry of lost love that includes the optimistic shout-out "*Come on, sweet Rita, you're my sugar babe*". On "Open Secret," Stills' pain descends into self-pity, given epic proportions by the Memphis Horns and a Cuban descarga piano and congas fade-out that serves a similar purpose to the second half of Derek & The Dominos' "Layla" (whose outro theme was written by Coolidge).

Sweet Rita haunts "Singin' Call", too, almost a CSN song which had been demoed for possible inclusion on Déjà Vu and includes lovely harmonies from Crosby. Given the subject matter of much of the album, presumably the presence of Nash would have been just too painful.

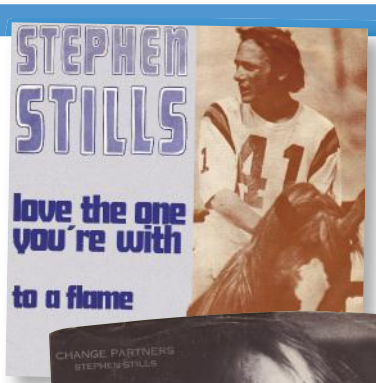
THE hurt gets even more agonising on "Bluebird Revisited", as the loss of Coolidge drives him back to his old Springfield song with a new chorus pleading, "*Come back, come back/ I can put away the rages/Come back, come back/Can we turn the next page together.*"

In between there's the cranked-up funk of "Nothing To Do But Today", a cracking guitar duet on "Fishes and Scorpions" on which he matches Clapton lick for wailing lick, an acoustic blues guitar workout in the style of "Black Queen" and "4+20" on "Know You Got To Run" and a brilliant stream-of-consciousness protest rant on "Word Game", inspired by watching a documentary film about apartheid and musically influenced by Dylan's "It's Alright Ma (I'm Only Bleeding)".

Perhaps because it was sandwiched between two other great records in a period of breakneck creativity, *Stephen Stills 2* has suffered from a certain neglect over the years, but fans have long recognised that it stands among his very best work. Stills was still grieving over Coolidge when he took the album on tour – a characteristically workaholic 52 date marathon tramp across the States. Most nights he took the stage drunk, and if the pressure of being solo in the spotlight may have had something to do with his need to get juiced, mostly Stills blamed Rita. "You lose a woman, you pour yourself into a bottle," he observed.

Yet something good came out of the tour when towards its end they hit Cleveland. The Flying Burrito Brothers were also in town and Chris Hillman came to see the show. They talked backstage afterwards and a week later Stills asked Hillman to come to Miami and bring the Burritos' steel guitarist Al Perkins with him.

Stills laid down eight tracks in a two-day session without sleep



TRACK MARKS

STEPHEN STILLS
Stephen Stills 2
ATLANTIC, 1971
★★★★★
Produced by: Stephen Stills and Bill Halverson
Recorded at: Criteria Studios, Miami
Highest chart position: UK 22; US 8

Stills
COLUMBIA, 1975
★★★★
Produced by: Stephen Stills and Bill Halverson
Recorded at: The Record Plant, LA
Highest chart position: UK 33; US 22

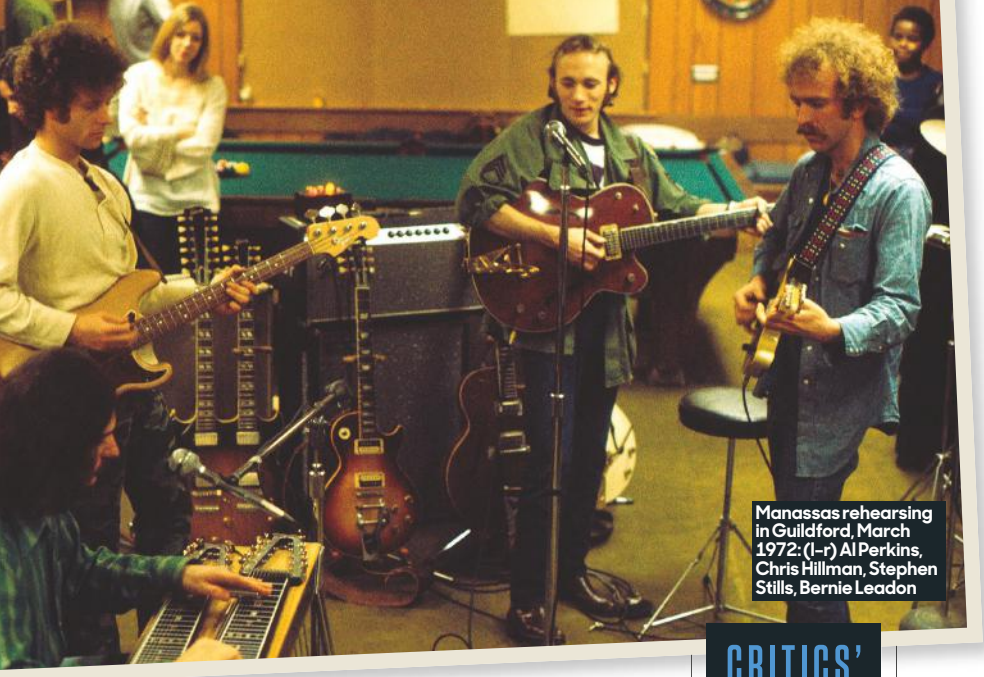
Illegal Stills
COLUMBIA, 1976
★★★
Produced by: Stephen Stills and Don Gehman
Recorded at: Criteria Studios, Miami
Highest chart position: UK 54; US 30

Thoroughfare Gap
COLUMBIA,1978
★★★
Produced by: Stephen Stills, Ron Albert and Howard Albert
Recorded at: Criteria Studios, Miami
Highest chart position: UK – ; US 83

MANASSAS
Manassas
ATLANTIC, 1972
★★★★★
Produced by: Stephen Stills, Chris Hillman and Dallas Taylor
Recorded at: Criteria Studios, Miami
Highest chart position: UK 30; US 4

Down The Road
ATLANTIC,1973
★★★
Produced by: Stephen Stills, Chris Hillman and Dallas Taylor
Recorded at: Caribou Ranch Studios, Colorado and The Record Plant, LA
Highest chart position: UK 33; US 26

DAVID TAN/SHINKOMUSIC/GETTY IMAGES



Manassas rehearsing in Guildford, March 1972: (l–r) Al Perkins, Chris Hillman, Stephen Stills, Bernie Leadon

When they arrived, they joined drummer Dallas Frazer, bassist Fuzzy Samuels, keyboard player Paul Harris plus percussionist Joe Lala from his touring band. Rehearsals went so well that within days Stills had declared that they were not only a bona fide band but were going to make more money than CSNY.

An enthusiastic amateur military historian who had dressed as a Confederate soldier on the cover of *Déjà Vu*, Stills named the band Manassas after the site of the first major battle of the American Civil War – and although they didn't make more money than CSNY the group did cut an album which, in the eyes of many, remains Stills' finest hour.

As ever, he worked to a manic schedule and at one point laid down eight tracks in a two-day session without sleep, forcing the band to keep pace with him. Within weeks they had enough material for a double album. This time Atlantic agreed to back his prolificacy.

Much of the strength of *Manassas* comes from the ensemble playing and in that sense it is genuinely a band album rather than a solo record. Yet the project was still essentially a vehicle for the songs that continued to pour out of Stills – Hillman gets just two co-writing credits in the 21 tracks.

Ambitiously organised into four separately themed sides, each showcasing a distinct musical mood, what impresses is the sheer breadth of the music. Stills' boast that Manassas was a band that could "play anything" was not a hollow one, and rock, pop, country, bluegrass, Latin jazz, blues and folk are intermingled in thrilling fashion. There's also a rough-edged energy that sounds as if many of the tracks were cut live in the studio, in stark contrast to the 800 hours it took to create the polished sheen of *Déjà Vu*.

Side One ("The Raven") operates broadly in The Band/Little Feat funk-rock territory with the haunting "Both Of Us (Bound To Lose)" the standout song, not least because of some harmonies of which CSN would have been proud.

From the bluegrass hoedown of "Fallen Eagle" to the gorgeous country harmonies of "So Begins The Task", the second side ("The Wilderness") sounds like a companion to the Eagles' debut album and is as deep into country rock as Stills ever burrowed. The third side ("Consider") is Captain Manyhands at his most experimental, particularly on the hazily impressionistic "Bound To Fall" and "Move Around", with its woozy Moog.

Despite its lumpen subtitle ("Rock & Roll Is Here To Stay"), the final side is a tour-de-force too, peaking with the majestic "Treasure (Take One)" and ending with a solo acoustic blues workout, dedicated to the recently departed Jimi Hendrix, Al Wilson and Duane Allman.

Stills was so pleased with the band that he set up a world tour and flew them to Britain to rehearse, putting them up for two months at Brookfield House, the Surrey mansion he had bought from Ringo Starr. Their stay cost him an "arm and a leg" and he complained that Lala had single-handedly drunk $10,000 worth of booze from his cellar, including a case of 1947 Cheval Blanc, the world's most expensive wine, without knowing what it was.

CRITICS' VERDICTS

DOWN THE ROAD

"For me, the two Latin songs are the best; Stills has a real affinity for this music – the hoarse, strained quality of his voice suits perfectly the yearning mood of the tunes – and I'd love to see 'Pensamiento' become a hit single." **Richard Williams, MM, 05/05/1973**

STILLS

"CBS came up with the cash and Stills has come up with an album that's good, but which in the main doesn't rank with his classics, two or three tracks excepted. It's a laidback record, to use a hackneyed term, and deliberately underproduced to the extent where the music oozes rather than bounces from the speakers." **Chris Charlesworth, MM, 19/07/1973**

THE well-oiled band then took to the road, playing three-hour shows to widespread acclaim. Yet when Manassas attempted to record a second album, it was clear that something wasn't right. The band sounded disengaged and the songs weren't there. When *Down The Road* appeared in 1973, it contained a paltry 30 minutes of music, none of it particularly inspiring.

So what had gone wrong? Much of Stills' best work had always been inspired by lovelorn anguish, but backstage at a Manassas gig in Paris in 1972, he had met Veronique Sanson. They married a few months later and would soon start a family. Was domestic contentment dulling his muse?

Stills offered a different explanation. "I short-circuited there for a while," he admitted. "Things were moving too fast. I got a little crazed. Too much drinking, too many drugs. What can I say?"

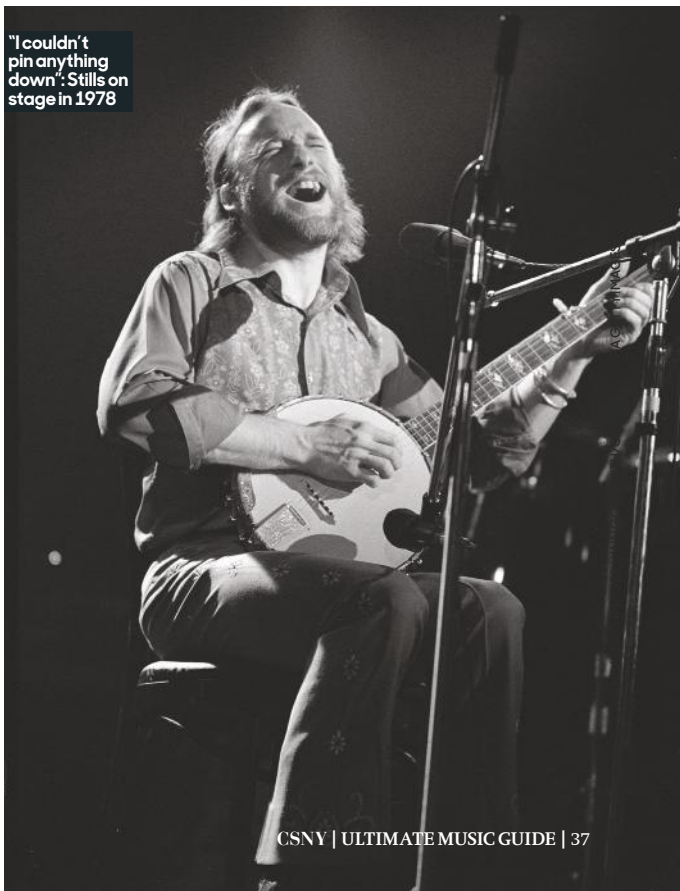
Whatever the reasons, he never again returned to the pinnacle he had achieved pre-1973, except in increasingly rare flashes. He began recording a third solo album but set it aside for the CSNY 1974 reunion tour. After leaving Atlantic for Columbia, the record eventually appeared in 1975 as *Stills*.

Several of the songs were high quality, but few were of recent vintage. "My Angel" had first been demoed in 1967 and "As I Come Of Age" had been recorded in 1970/71 with Ringo Starr on drums – CSN harmonies were added at a later date. Of the newer songs "First Things First" had been played live on CSNY's 1974 tour, but was a co-write with Joe Schermie of Three Dog Night. It was hard not to conclude that the well which had once seemed bottomless was starting to run dry.

Illegal Stills (1976) and *Thoroughfare Gap* (1978) confirmed the drought. The former included a cover of Young's Springfield song "The Loner", "Midnight In Paris" written by Sanson and five lacklustre co-writes with Donnie Dacus. The latter included covers of Greg Allman's "Midnight Rider" and a truly horrific, synth-heavy, disco-fied "Not Fade Away".

"Nothing I tried seemed to turn out right," Stills admitted. "It was just a bad time for me. I couldn't pin anything down."

A decade that had started out full of promise and glory ended with Stills going disco and being shouted at by Elvis Costello in the bar of a Holiday Inn. Would there be a way back? ●



"I couldn't pin anything down": Stills on stage in 1978

MICHAEL PUTLAND/GETTY

Stephen Stills at home in Elstead, Surrey, November 15, 1970

"The lights went on in the room and it was full of policemen..."

Pull an armchair up to the fire, the new lord of Ringo's manor – The Loner, some call him – is in full flow. About OD drug busts, Hendrix jams, cocaine, ego and Buffalo Springfield's infighting. "We were the rockingest, jumpingest motherfuckers you ever seen," STEPHEN STILLS tells Michael Watts

MELODY MAKER MARCH 11, 1972

FOR some time Peter Sellers owned the house, and then he sold it to Ringo Starr, who only lived in it two months because he hated having to make the traffic-cluttered journey every morning down the Guildford bypass to Twickenham Studios where they were shooting *Let It Be*.

Stephen Stills lives in it now – the 14 rooms with their oak beams salvaged from the Armada, the low fireplaces, the sauna house, the Japanese lakes, are his to roam. His status as a musician is betrayed by a fully equipped rehearsal room, and two gold records on the living room wall. On the same wall is a text from George Harrison: "We're all one and life goes on within you and without you."

That song on the *Sgt Pepper* album has another line about "*the space between us all*". It seems to aptly reflect the idea of Stills as a man out on his own, an isolated individual surrounded by acquaintances: The Loner. When you ask him if Neil's song is really about him, he pauses a good long while and then finally says he would have thought it was more applicable to Neil himself. A lot of people, he knows, think the opposite.

Stephen Stills doesn't emerge from his bedroom until about eight in the evening. He usually goes to bed around four or five every morning, gets up late in the afternoon, sits around a while and then plays with whoever is around. The night before it was Osibisa. "Those boys!" He shakes his head. "Such groovy dudes!"

He's wearing an American footballer's shirt, just like on the cover of *Stephen Stills* – only it's got a number seven on it, not 41. But his appearance isn't that of a footballer. If he was a little shorter and slightly less heavy, he'd be everyone's picture of a jockey: the legs, in their boots and blue jeans, faintly bowed, the face lean and sharp, the body forever bent in a vaguely forward position.

He carries his left leg stiffly, the result of a skiing accident in Colorado, where he lives for six months each winter. He looks – and is, by all accounts – an extremely athletic man, wiry and hard. After midnight, over the dining-room table, he talks for nearly two hours about skiing, horseracing, and motor cars; references to Jean-Claude Killy and the famous American horse, Man O'War, crosscut in the conversation with how he once drove home smashed from Tramp's [*nightclub*] one night in exactly 37½ minutes. (It took us almost an hour-and-a-half to get there).

If he's not talking about sport, it's politics. Of course, the rock musicians have influenced politics, he says. If it were not for them the ➤

Senate wouldn't be as liberal as it was, and he goes on to present a convincing case. Don't be misled by some of the political naivety spouted out by CSN and Y. Stills has as firm a grasp of American politics as any young person I've ever met.

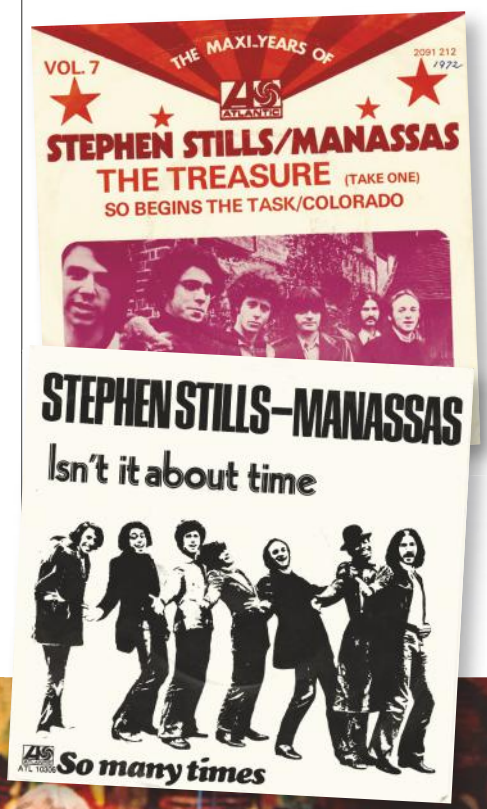
Stephen Stills, in fact, talks with extreme facility about most things. Before dinner he sits in an armchair in the half-light from the huge log fire, with the big colour television flickering silently, his voice very soft and throaty, suddenly erupting now and then in a gust of laughter.

"DID you see me on *Sounding Out* talking about the blues?" he asks. That's his roots. "Jet Set", a track off his new double album, *Manassas*, is pure Jimmy Reed, whom he saw as a kid at the University of Florida.

Who else did he see as a kid? "Oh, Ray Charles, plus a lotta jazz. I saw 'Trane about four times and Miles five or six times, The Jazz Crusaders and the Modern Jazz Quartet." The Modern Jazz Quartet? "Yeah, I liked 'em. They laid down this sleepy kinda impression." He stretched back in his chair and yawned in imitation. "They could play really fast but it still had this laid-back quality. I dunno. I really can't explain it. I was very young and I haven't seen 'em for years. Like, Gary Burton's band now sounds like the MJQ did when I was a kid, though he's got a lot more flash. He's really flash, like Jimi Hendrix compared to BB King."

Stills saw many of these people, such as Coltrane, when he was working years ago in the French quarter of New Orleans. He'd go to a lot of clubs, like Vernon's; slip quietly into the back and try not to be seen. Because of the heat mostly, he explains, and also because of the people who lived in the area: "It'd be like, 'Shit, man, if we can't come to your place, you can't come to ours.' But we'd always break that down. Vernon would say, they're cool. But there, everyone would shut up and listen to the music, and only in the break would they sit and order their drinks and rap. The last time I went to Ronnie Scott's there was a group there with a young kid doing the Roland Kirk thing, playing clarinet and alto at the same time, and doing it real well, but the people there! It was like being at Tramp's. Real noisy. I would've liked to have gotten into that band."

Stephen's beginnings are in black music, but more specifically in soul. His new album, though, is more than half taken up with stone blues from the Deep South. And one of the sides is pretty much country. He's recorded it with a band, also called Manassas, which has Chris Hillman on guitar, Al Perkins (also from the Burritos) on steel and Telecaster, Joe Lala on congas, Paul Harris, organ, Fuzzy Samuels, bass, and Dallas Taylor, drums. He says the album sounds like Buffalo Springfield.



Is that what he wanted to get back to? "Sort of." Don't look back and all that stuff? He smiles thinly. "'Don't Look At My Shadow (It's Behind Me)' is a song I wrote on this album. I've just said, let's get simple and right and be flash enough to carry on with a little charisma. When Buffalo Springfield started we were the rockingest, jumpingest motherfuckers you ever seen," he chuckled throatily, "and it never got recorded."

"Bruce Palmer and Dewey Martin could really get like that. Bruce was very affected by The Rolling Stones, y'know. He would lay down a groove and we could've done anything. His relationship with me and Neil and Dewey was the focal point of the group. He was the focus that balanced Neil and I. Richie's power was in his showmanship." His eyes turned vacantly on the silent television screen in reminiscence.

"At the beginning, Neil would sort of stand off at the side and play his axe and be very cool, and everybody dug that about him. And I was on the other side of the stage calling it. I would call the show. That was before the ego trips, when we were a band, when we lived together. We did everything, y'know. We'd cram ourselves into a car together and all go off to the gig. But then we started working the Whisky and all those strange chicks started following me and Neil and it kind of blew the whole balance.

"I REMEMBER particularly one time in New York, before Bruce really began to withdraw. He just looked at me and said: 'This band is jive, this band is getting jive, man!' He very seldom talked, and when he did it was

Manassas on the BBC's *In Concert*, 1972: (l-r): Chris Hillman, Paul Harris, Calvin "Fuzzy" Samuel, Al Perkins, Stephen Stills, Dallas Taylor, Joe Lala

MICHAEL PUTLAND/GETTY

philosophy and stuff like that. An extremely intellectual man, really self-contained.

"But my temper was starting to get in the way, 'cos I would watch the shit go down. I was pissed off, and I sensed that Neil was resenting the fact that I was starting to play lead guitar. I was the arranger, and all of a sudden I was treading on his territory, so he started getting into mine and so forth and we just got into this ridiculous 21-year-old boys-in-the-band gig. Then we were finding fault with everything. Everything started to lose proportion and it got stupid, y'know. It was just dumb, a kid's trip. Chris and I can relate the same experiences about The Byrds that brought on the same trouble – trouble with David and Roger."

The theme of drugs has always weaved in and out of Stills' life as a musician. He'll talk about drugs, but warily, because he knows that while the public is open to discussion on certain areas, others are not yet regarded as permissible. And besides, he's concerned that there should not be any emulation of the habits of rock stars. He is emphatically against the use of heroin. It may be unhip, he says, but he's one of those musicians who's profoundly anti-heroin and he'll do his best to preach against it.

On the subject of coke – which is in wide use on the rock scene, especially in America – he treads very carefully. A couple of years ago, he says, he was "a cokehead". He had a reputation for it. That's in the past now. He's read extensively about the drug and is aware of the danger of an aneurysm in the brain – a burst blood vessel that can lead to cerebral haemorrhage.

At the start, he says, it was just hash and grass. He stopped that three years ago because he found his metabolism was such that he couldn't handle it: "I'm now 27, but I didn't really start to grow up until around 25, and then I went through a period of self-awareness. I started operating on the fact that my head was too fast to begin with, that I was a fairly high-energy person, and that when I got blown away on grass it would all become confused and wouldn't really calm me down. In my very early twenties I was a tremendous pothead and had a real good time doing it, but after a while it made everything a big jumble. I found myself sitting in places vegetating with absolutely nothing to contribute to a conversation.

"People would start talking about something that I was perfectly capable of discussing, and I would sit there like this" – he slumped in his chair – "as if I was smacked out. I could hear the guy talking and understand him, and the answer would come, but by the time I got it together he'd said something else, another perspective had occurred to me which would negate the first thing that I thought of. That situation can get you pretty neurotic. Which I got. So I just put it down."

HIS notorious bust last year, however, was not for coke but for pills. Downers. It was just dumb, he says. There had been four of them in a hotel and there were all kinds of drugs around – "uppers and downers, pot and coke, and lots of other stuff. I took responsibility basically for everything. I got a fine, which was hefty enough but fair within the law.

"What happened was that I took some pills, got blown away, and blew my cool, and it ended up like I was ODing on pills, and so they had to call an ambulance. We were all drugged up and somebody crashed on the door and I got up and kinda staggered over to it – I thought one of the people didn't have their key to the room – and the couple across the hall were standing there and went, 'Aaaargh!' They called the manager and everybody. I don't remember anything else until the lights went on in the room and it was full of policemen. And that ended that trip."

Surely, I said, without being presumptuous, it was the responsibility of the artist to protect his creativity? "I know so," he replied very quietly and firmly. Was it, I put to him, the fact that having so much money as successful rock musicians it was difficult to resist temptation? "Yeah, yeah, it's all kinda things. You gotta dig one thing right off: escapism lies in all of us. And for a musician, with more success it becomes harder to get involved in normal relationships because people can't simply relate to you as a real person. So there's always that thing of a man having to come to grips with a certain kind of unreal atmosphere that surrounds his life. It's obvious that drugs will take any latent neurosis and tend to bring it out, so they all get on some kind of a trip behind being successful.

"Jimi [*Hendrix*] took a dive, too. I was told that somebody gave him a mandrax and said: 'Here! [*he clapped his hands sharply*]. You can't drink when you take one of these, right?' And Jimi then said 'groovy' and went down to a club and got blown away on drinking, and went on a bummer 'cos he couldn't hold it. He jammed with some guys, and that didn't happen, so he said, 'Fuck it, I'm going to sleep,' and went straight out of the club. He went to bed and was sick, and having taken a mandrax he didn't roll over and so he swallowed his vomit. Completely accidental, like that."

Stills had a great affection for Hendrix. Right after the Monterey Festival he played with him, Buddy Miles and Bruce Palmer at Stills' beachhouse in Malibu; 14 hours solid. Hendrix was also featured on "Old Times Good Times", on Stephen's first solo album. And they cut two records together in Island Studios a couple of years back, which Stills possesses and has no immediate plans of releasing. With Conrad Isidore and Fuzzy Samuels as the rhythm section, they jammed a lot and then Jimi played some straight blues. There was even some intention of then forming a band together. He and Hendrix just missed each other going in opposite directions, says Stills. There was pressure from their respective managements to cut their individual records.

Stills (bottom left) with Neil Young (top) in Buffalo Springfield, 1967

> "Neil was resenting the fact I was playing lead guitar. I was treading on his territory"

STILLS is sorrowful when he talks about him. Around the time of his death, he explains, Hendrix was in a turmoil because he couldn't find a band. There wasn't anyone good enough to play with him: "He was constantly frustrated in a musical sense. We used to play together all the time at Steve Paul's place in New York and there'd always be some bummer cat. One session I finally made it clear to everyone that the following people will take the stage and the rest will kindly stay away. One time Jimi actually had to come over and kick me to play lead guitar because I was so determined to show the reason he was unhappy was that he'd never had anyone lay it down for him."

Such a selfless attitude seems quite remarkable in a musician who is popularly supposed to be a megalomaniac. Stills agrees that that's his image but he doesn't concede that it's the truth. In the final analysis, he says, someone has to be the boss. It takes a strong ego to be a musician, he points out, particularly if you're an arranger. And that's his gig. That's why he left Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young: before it got too heavy. He won't play with them again until it's comfortable once more, until they no longer suspect him of ulterior motives to sabotage their songs.

There's a lot of myth that envelops superstars, and Stephen Stills, much as he detests the tag, finds himself on that particular pedestal. It's lonely at the top, sings Randy Newman. In a slightly different context, in "Suite: Judy Blues Eyes", Stills says much the same. But it seems almost too pat to stylise him as "the loner", the guy with lots of hangers-on but no friends.

It was like that once, in California, Stephen concedes. He was green and people took advantage of him. He would ask chicks to buy his groceries, give them 300 dollars, and tell them to keep the change. They always did. That way he lost $27,000.

For Stephen Stills, or most any superstar, read Bob Dylan: "Where one man's life might begin, that's exactly where mine ends." ●

GAB/REDFERNS/GETTY

GRAHAM NASH

Wild Tales

RELEASED JANUARY 2, 1974

Post-'Human Highway' sessions, Nash bleakly recuperates at home, with help from Joni, Neil and Crosby. World fails to catch on.

BY PAUL MOODY

BY May 1973, the four members of Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young were all reeling from personal setbacks. The death of Young's guitarist Danny Whitten, Stills' near-fatal drug overdose at home in Surrey, the failing health of Crosby's mother, Aliph, and Nash's depression after breaking up with Rita Coolidge had brought this most combustible of bands to the realisation that, after three years apart, a chance to, literally, regroup in Hawaii might not be such a bad idea.

Having each stockpiled songs in the hope of such an opportunity, the sessions – split between Young's wooden beach house at Mala Wharf and the deck of Crosby's boat, The Mayan – went smoothly, with Nash, ever the peacemaker, even arranging an impromptu photo shoot for the album's sleeve on their last day on the island, taking the picture himself.

Taken at dusk, the band looking suitably sand-blasted next to swaying palm trees, it captured the harmonious vibe, mirrored by the album's prospective title, "Human Highway".

Almost immediately afterwards, however, simmering tensions over both business dealings and the various members' cocaine use saw their fragile alliance fracture once more. "The energy just fell out of the project," lamented Nash in his autobiography. "We broke up and left Hawaii separately."

While Nash kept his hand in over the summer, supporting Young in LA and playing his own shows with Crosby, by September 1973 his frustration with both the band's implosion and the political situation in America – though not a US citizen until 1978, he was as gripped as anyone by Nixon's unfolding Watergate scandal – had reached a tipping point.

CRITICS' VERDICTS

"Drummer Johny Barbata and bassist Tim Drummond were the rhythm section on Young's *Time Fades Away* album, so maybe they thought they were still playing for Young when they made this record. It sure sounds that way. [...] Really this album is pretty anaemic – totally devoid of any real substance. Still, Graham is a nice guy." **Steve Clarke, NME, 19/01/1969**

"His heart is in the right place, but sometimes he can be just a little too naive." **Robert Partridge, MM, 26/01/1974**

Enlisting a core of regular Bay Area musicians – Jefferson Airplane drummer Johny Barbata, bassist Tim Drummond and pedal steel guitarist Ben Keith – he set to work in the 16-track studio in the basement of his sprawling house, the Spreckels mansion, at 737 Buena Vista Drive, San Francisco (previously owned by author Jack London). Working until 3am – with his days broken up by trips to Mama's restaurant on Washington Square or to science museum The Exploratorium – he poured his frustrations into his music.

The result, *Wild Tales*, finds Nash – historically the source of CSNY's most upbeat songs – at both his angriest and most melancholic. The sleeve depicts an exhausted-looking Nash staring blankly into the lens while holding open a book depicting a leafless tree – clearly a lot has changed since the bucolic scene on 1971 solo debut *Songs For Beginners*.

THE opening title track confirms its author's frazzled state. A ramshackle rocker inspired by the hair-raising story of an acquaintance who discovered his wife had run off with the milkman, had a motorcycle accident and lost his job in just a few days, at two-and-a-half minutes it feels almost peevishly undercooked, as if to suggest Nash knows full well that, had CSNY recorded it, the song would have morphed into a stadium-sized showstopper.

While a slide guitar-driven "Hey You (Looking At The Moon)", featuring harmonica by Neil Young, feels like a pleasant hangover from his debut, there's a real sense of grievance about "Prison Song". One of the two of his songs CSNY had been working up in Hawaii, it's a protest song combining the story of Nash's father – who was imprisoned for possessing stolen goods when Nash was a teenager – with that of MC5

TRACK MARKS

1. Wild Tales ★★★★
2. Hey You (Looking At the Moon) ★★★
3. Prison Song ★★★
4. You'll Never Be The Same ★★★
5. And So It Goes ★★★★
6. Grave Concern ★★★
7. Oh! Camil (The Winter Soldier) ★★★
8. I Miss You ★★★★
9. On The Line ★★★
10. Another Sleep Song ★★★★

Label: Atlantic
Produced by: Graham Nash
Recorded at: Rudy Records, San Francisco
Personnel includes: Graham Nash (vocals, guitars, piano), Neil Young (as "Joe Yankee" – acoustic piano), Joni Mitchell and David Crosby (backing vocals), Johny Barbata (drums), Tim Drummond (bass), Ben Keith (pedal steel, dobro)
Highest chart position: UK – ; US 34

manager John Sinclair, who received a 10-year sentence in Texas for marijuana possession.

With Nash's layered vocal harmonies set against a foreboding, Kurt Weill-like backdrop, it's hauntingly powerful, Nash pouring his heart into a vocal dripping with contempt for the established order.

While a pedal steel-driven "You'll Never Be The Same" comes with a note of contrition, Nash lamenting, "*There's no-one I can blame about my foolish pride*", any sense of self-indulgence vanishes with the stunning "And So It Goes".

The second of Nash's Hawaii songs, it's a slow-burning rocker with a piano part by "Joe Yankee" (a thinly disguised Neil Young) and harmony vocals by David Crosby that finds Nash riffing on his own place in the cosmos, exploding into life with the euphoric chorus of, "*Music gets you high/Everybody grows/And so it goes.*"

A reminder that, even at his most enraged, Nash can't match Neil Young for blind fury comes with "Grave Concern". A continuation of the themes of their (brilliant) 1972 collaboration "War Song", it's a jaunty fuzz-rocker in the George Harrison mould, the apocalyptic tone encapsulated in the line, "*Distant thunder rolling over the hill.*"

> Working until 3am, Nash poured his frustrations into his music

It's followed by the equally political "Oh! Camil (The Winter Soldier)". A breezy folk song featuring Dave Mason from Traffic on 12-string guitar, it tells the tale of Vietnam vet-turned activist Scott Camil, without getting bogged down in right-on rhetoric.

Nash also shoots from the hip when it comes to his personal life. Accompanied solely by piano, "I Miss You" finds him musing on his failed relationship with (presumably) Joni Mitchell, recalling, surreally, "*Dining at your mother's on whipped cream and wine*", before signing off with a heartfelt, "*Of broken hearts I've had my share/ But I miss you.*"

If a throwaway "On The Line" breaks the spell, the best is saved for last with the extraordinary "Another Sleep Song". A sequel to his solo debut's "Sleep Song", and written – where else? – on a confessional visit to Barbra Streisand's house, it's given an otherworldly feel by Joni Mitchell's ghostly backing vocals. As a summation of Nash's isolated state of mind in 1973, it's perfectly pitched: "*I travel in a bubble and I can't relate/Something is happening to my head,*" he sighs, echoing that haunted, shell-shocked sleeve image.

Little wonder that *Wild Tales* didn't set the world alight. Released in January 1974, it charted at 34 in the Billboard Top 200, making it the first of CSNY's releases not to reach the Top 30. "Whatever the reason, the public wasn't ready for it," Nash later said. "The whole affair left me in a deep emotional hole."

Bruised by the experience, his next solo album, *Earth & Sky*, wouldn't arrive until seven years later. Yet for its creator at least, this bleak snapshot of his troubled state of mind in the early '70s continues to resonate. Forty-six years further down the human highway, Nash will tour the album this September, for a public by now, surely, hungry for *Wild Tales*' strange, unique magic. ●

"We're growing up – at last"

He's proved himself with *Wild Tales*, but GRAHAM NASH has an itch he can't scratch: CROSBY, STILLS, NASH & YOUNG, finally due back on the road. "I've seen a lot of bullshit," he says. "But I'm willing to put up with another year's bullshit, if we can play some good music."

MELODY MAKER APRIL 6, 1974

THE spirit of Woodstock is not dead. That's bad news for all you posers that have just had your hair dyed bright orange and finally splashed out on that divine lurex jump-suit, but it's all right with me. I can always use a bit of love and peace. So can Graham Nash. Well, Graham is actually excited at the prospect, but then Graham gets excited a lot. Not as excited as he used to, mind.

After hanging out with Joni and David and Stephen and Grace and Paul and Jerry and Neil, the impulsive former Hollie is treading more carefully. He's cooled himself out. Mellowed is the vogue word, I'm assured. Mature is another word altogether, but some kind of development is going on inside Nash's head.

Naivety is a quality that Graham is often damned or blessed for possessing. And certainly his enthusiasm suggests a kind of childlike innocence. However, he's no dummy. He's acutely aware of the location of his own faults, and he's found out exactly who he is and knows where he's going. How many other artists could claim the same?

Lyrically he's progressing. Becoming more assured and self-confident. From the nervous "*be sure to hide the roaches*" of "Pre-Road Downs" to the single-minded "*Rules and regulations, who needs 'em/Throw them out the door*" of "Chicago" is a big step. Now he's going further.

"Oh! Camil (The Winter Soldier)" on *Wild Tales* is a pertinent and insightful view into a real political situation. But, says Graham, squalling cross-legged among the nonchalance of Blake's Hotel, South Kensington, his solo career as a profound or otherwise songwriter is of secondary importance to him.

"I'm a harmony singer, man. That's what I do best, so that's what I'm going to concentrate on from now on. I've just finished a solo tour. I've proved that I can get people without help from anybody else, so I don't have to keep on doing that."

And from June 1 onwards, Graham will be able to fulfil his best function. That's when the pieces fall into place again, and David Crosby, Stephen Stills, Graham Nash and Neil Young try to fit the pieces together again, after an absence of three years. They'll be aided by Russ Kunkel of The Section on drums, and Tim Drummond, a former Famous Flame of James Brown on bass.

The reunion, surprisingly, was not instigated by a member of CSNY, but by that famed master organiser David Geffen, the business brain behind the Bob Dylan resurgence. "I tell you," says Nash, with the vaguest hint of California now colouring those broad Mancunian tones, "those guys get me high. CSNY has its pros and cons, but the music overrides all that. Something happens when the four of us get together, some special sort of chemistry."

Nash's role in the chemical formula has always been a vague one. Musically, he has little of the technical instrumental control that Stills and Young possess, and he doesn't share Crosby's flair for original or unorthodox jazz-type chordings, either. But then, like his song tells it, he's a simple man.

With Young and Stills like duelling stags at either side of the stage, another solo instrumental voice isn't so vital. Graham digs the licks that Neil and Stephen let fly, but he's not impressed by virtuosity for its own sake.

"Did you see Focus? I hated them, thought they were awful. But I get very paranoid about people that play good, because I don't. I think I can write good, but I just can't get myself into the state of mind to sit down and practise for, like, 10 years just so's I can go *mowowowowowowahwah*..."

He mimes a McLaughlin-fast guitarist. "I can admire that ability in other people, though. Neil practises for four or five hours a day for weeks on end."

DESPITE all the stories of feuds and ego-trips, Nash insists that it's been mainly work situations that have kept the band apart these past years. Rehearsals have always been scant, and this time out there's going to be only three weeks or so before the group take on the major concert halls of America.

"We always under-rehearse. We've never, ever, gotten to the point where the show was slick. I'm a little worried this time, I don't know if three weeks is gonna be enough. But there's always sufficient madness to make it work."

Any truth in stories that the band battle backstage about whose material is going to be performed? "No, we've always got round that one. We're very honest about it. You have to be. If somebody's song doesn't turn you on, then you're not going to be able to feel it. You won't be able to sing it right."

Graham's pretty optimistic about the tour. Almost willing it to work. "I've seen a lot of bullshit go down in the past few years, and I'm willing to put up with another year's bullshit if we can play some good music."

Wow, that sounds provocative. He sighs, almost theatrically. "Well now, how can I put it? Sometimes people aren't who you expect them to be. You expect people to be trustworthy and they turn out not to be. But I've been realising lately that people aren't gonna live up to my expectations ➤

MICHAEL PUTLAND/GETTY IMAGES

"I've proved I can get people without help": Nash in The Hague, Holland, July, 1974

and I'm starting to come to terms with that. Starting to accept people for what they are."

Evasive. I still don't understand.

"Y'know... so what if friends are assholes some of the time? Aren't we all? Before, in the group, it used to get serious, and we'd get real crazy about it and not communicate. We're growing up, I think." He smiles, and adds, "At last."

Growing up and growing older. The years are beginning to show on Nash's face. Considerably more than a decade in showbusiness taking its toll. And yet anyone less like a pop star in appearance would be difficult to imaging. The sprouting beard and outgrown urchin haircut give him an almost medieval look, not contradicted by the plain green shirt and pigskin waistcoat.

Painfully thin and with cheekbones prominent in his starved face, shoes split and cracked, he looks like some Sherwood Forest outlaw down on his luck.

Nash cups his hands together and raises them in the air. He waits for me to watch before continuing. Remembering that a man's a man who looks a man right between the eyes, I do just that. He continues.

"I see a giant hole," he says. "I see a giant hole everywhere. I find very little of that special magic in the music. That indefinable something that was there round about '69/70, the Woodstock period. We're going to bring that feeling back. There's good music around, but I haven't, for a long time, seen people get off like the way they do when CSNY really hit."

But Woodstock was five years ago. Can we be sure that it was real, that nostalgia hasn't painted it a lot more rosy than it actually was?

"Oh, it was real. It was a wondrous event. There was a feeling there that you just couldn't believe."

At the time, this side of the Atlantic, the festival appeared, as one writer put it, not unlike an orgy of self-congratulation. Graham tensed, visibly. A little uptight, he spoke louder.

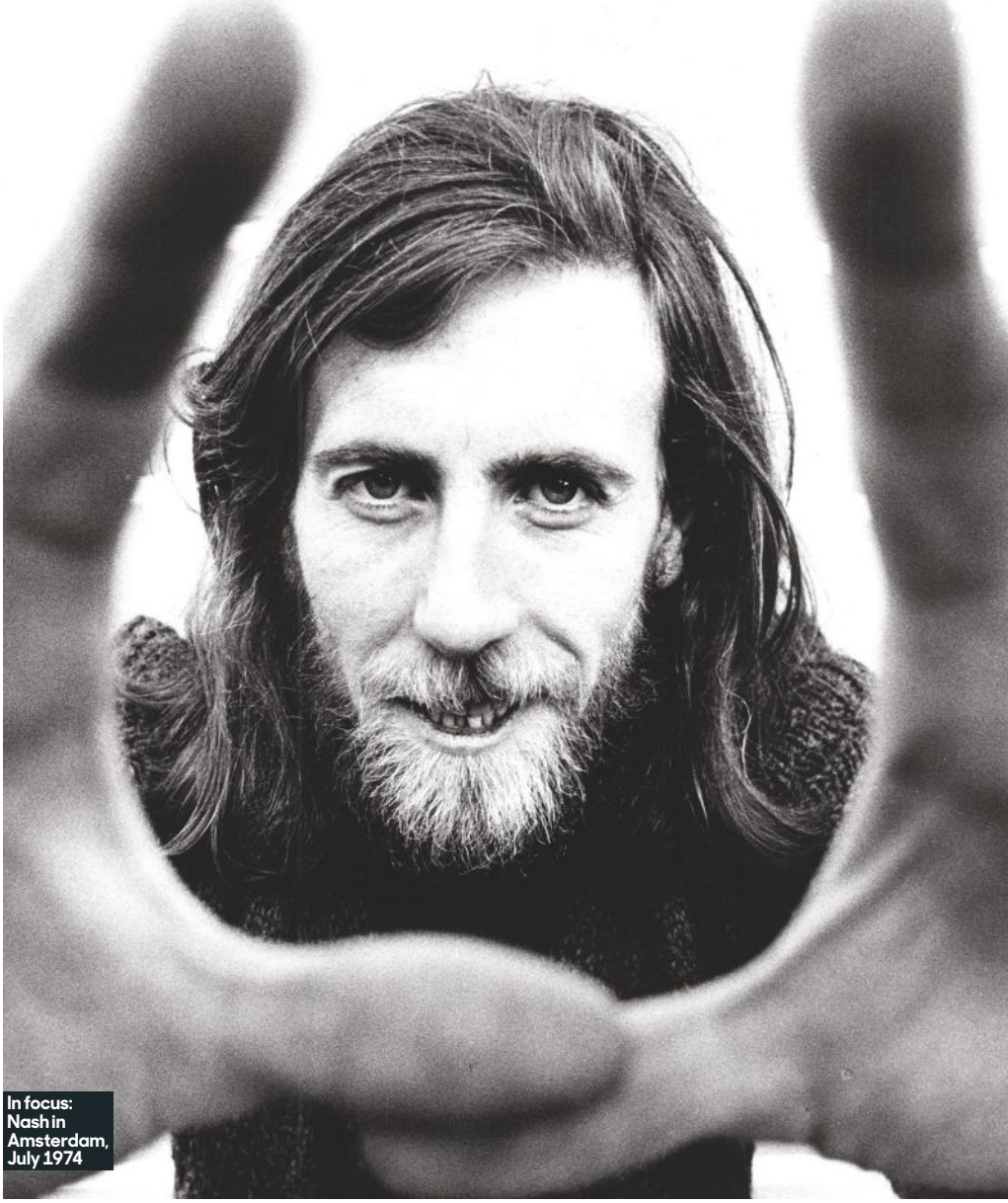
"I gotta tell you that getting 500,000 people together and having no fights and no murders and no craziness was a great feat, something to be proud of. With 28 bands on, there was all the ingredients there for a major madness, but that didn't happen."

So what did Woodstock achieve, in concrete terms, either for America or for rock?

"It was just such a fantastically good thing. It changed rock'n'roll. That feeling that we've been talking about was spearheaded by Woodstock, although the seeds had been sown a little earlier. The first Crosby, Stills & Nash album had something of that spirit. That everybody is really not so different, and maybe we can pull together. Just that hope."

IT was the same motivation, the same optimism that sucked Nash into the early Jefferson Starship recordings. "Right. Those same people, Paul Kantner and everybody – they're always out there saying, 'Listen. We know it's crazy. Nobody's saying that the situation isn't bad, that the world isn't fucked up. But for one hour we can get off!'

"That's basically what the Airplane say, and it's what the Grateful Dead say, too, except that they say it for five hours at a time. It's what we'll be saying, as well. It's so important for me...



In focus: Nash in Amsterdam, July 1974

GIJSBERT HANEKROOT/REDFERNS

"For two years I analysed and digested specific problems, political and social problems and tried to help out where I could. You can't do it. You really can't do anything. You're playing a benefit for old folks or Vietnam veterans or kids even, and some guy will grab you and say, 'Why don't you ever do benefits for blind people.' And it's just... 'Oh Jesus, just let me play, will you.'

"But when people are having a good time and being moved by the music you can feel them all becoming unified behind one force, and that unity continues when the music's over. That's what happened at Woodstock. And that same energy is returning now, I can feel it."

> "So what if friends are assholes some of the time – aren't we all"

Nash believes that the Bob Dylan/Band tour is an indication of the new non-cynical renaissance that he claims is taking place. "It's a cycle that's gradually completing itself," he says. "Who would have thought that Dylan would ever go out on the road again? I hope the Beatles get back together again. You don't think they will? Well, I never thought that CSNY could work together again."

It's a different situation, surely. Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young and Bob Dylan can both play material that hasn't dated over the years, that has a timeless quality to it. Yet The Beatles always seemed to mirror whatever was happening then. They can hardly come back and sing "She Loves You" and "I Want To Hold Your Hand".

"That's not true, man. I'd love to fucking hear them doing 'I Want To Hold Your Hand'. Can you imagine it, them coming on and opening with that? I would freak completely."

But more to the point, what are CSNY going to open with?

"I wanna start with Neil's tune 'When You Dance I Can Really Love'. I can't wait. Those four-part harmonies. Oh boy, that's exciting music. Those goose pimples that I just felt down my back thinking about the first time I heard us on stage together is the reason that I'm here now, and the reason why I left England in '68, and even the reason why I started in rock'n'roll."

CONVERSATION shifts to The Hollies. Did we know, he says, that Eric Haydock is a professional footballer with Stockport County these days? And why is Bobby Elliott wearing a long blond wig, he asks. Bobby, says

Nash, was without hair even before The Hollies started. He was always a good-looking bald kid.

"The reason I left The Hollies," volunteers Nash without persuasion, "was simply that I was smoking a lot of dope and they weren't. I swear to God it was as simple as that."

We chuckle about flower-power publicity photos of The Hollies – Allan Clarke never looked right with a perm, a kaftan and a budgie bell, somehow. "I was into all that, too, y'know. I can't criticise them there. But," he adds, "I gave back my white suit. They've still got theirs. Think about that one."

Did the pre-CSNY Nash know exactly what he was heading for when he quit in '68?

"Are you kidding? Do you know what it took to leave my wife, my family, my money, my band and my country? I knew instantly, the first time I sang with David and Stephen, that I had to leave."

Nash had first met Crosby when The Byrds toured here after "Tambourine Man" hit. They struck up a friendship back then, he recalls, at the time when The Byrds got systematically salted in all of the music papers every week, without fail. With typical drama, Graham claims that Crosby "saved my life". Here's how:

"I was writing all these tunes that, for me, were self-expression things, and I was happy with them. But The Hollies didn't want to know. And so I really began to doubt my ability to communicate on that level. It was Crosby that said, 'Hey, play that thing again. You mean you have another song like that?' It was Crosby that reawakened my faith in myself."

Later in the States, the Hollies threw a party for their friends at the Whiskey A Go Go on Valentine's Day, friends including the Buffalo Springfield and The Byrds. After a performance by the English group, Stephen Stills and David Crosby took Nash for a drive round the area. Plans were discussed.

"The next day we got together and David and Stephen sang 'Helplessly Hoping' with two-part harmonies," recalls Graham, "they sang it through twice, and the third time I was in there. And ha! I couldn't believe that I could get subtle vocal harmonies with a band that I didn't know. CSN sang as good as on the first day we started together.

"Sometimes I don't think that any of us had anything to do with it. Does that sound strange? To me, CSN sounds as if it would have happened if it was CSN or ABC or DFT or whatever. I'm really proud of that first album. I think it was the best thing we ever did."

Déjà Vu sounded more contrived. Less fun, somehow. What happened?

"I'll tell you. When we started the first album, we were all in love, and everything was sunny. And then just before the second album, Joni and me split up, Neil got divorced from his wife, Stephen hadn't seen Judy in months, and the week before we were due to start, David's lady Christine was killed in a crash. We were bombed out. We were totally wiped out. That's the difference between CSN and CSNY. It started out really weird."

Similarly weird to those outside a small circle of friends is the willingness with which the Laurel Canyon mob spell out the details of their love lives before the mass audience. We all know that "Lady Of The Island" and "Our House" were written for Joni Mitchell. How does it feel to have those songs still floating around four and five years later?

Graham thinks hard about this one, brow furrowed in concentration. "I think," he says finally, "that that isn't really so different from you reading an interview you did a couple of years ago. You'd probably think, yeah, I believed that then, but that's not where I am now. We can all say that about our old work. But I've never felt hesitant about opening myself up in that way. It's painful sometimes, sure. I don't think I could sing 'Our House' now."

He laughs at his own seriousness.

"I don't know, though. Maybe I could sing it. I'm supposed to be doing a TV show while I'm here and I don't know what I'm going to do on it. They keep asking me, but I can't tell them. I won't know until I get there and feel what the format of the show is, who else is appearing, whether it's a teenybop show or whether there's going to be some interesting rapping."

SPEAKING of TV shows, one of the most bizarre things ever screened has to be the performance CSNY once gave for a Tom Jones show. Neil Young was scowling viciously as the Welsh bump-and-grind merchant made nonsense of Crosby's "Long Time Gone" with Nash and the song's author singing harmonies and a keyboard-playing Stephen Stills wailing an additional soulful vocal line.

"Hahahahahahahahaha, I have some tapes of that, and it ain't that bad, y'know? Surprisingly enough. The point of the exercise was originally to try to get across to a whole audience that wouldn't otherwise hear us, but I'm not sure if it was worth it. They treated us badly. In rehearsals we'd just be getting up to the three-part harmonies and they'd shout, 'Cut! Hold it! More lights!' And we were furious – 'DON'T EVER DO THAT TO US AGAIN' – but they just thought we were crazy."

Graham Nash is going dreamy again, sounding like he's missing the stimulation of the San Francisco community after a mere 24 hours separation. It's the most European, cosmopolitan place in America, he says. Nowhere else do artists from all idioms communicate so freely and so totally. Is there not a danger, I asked, of the LA / San Francisco scene stagnating with all the cross-fertilisation that's happening between the California bands? Everybody playing on everybody else's records. David Crosby's *If I Could Only Remember My Name* seemed symptomatic of this malaise, apparently incorporating the services of everybody that had ever wielded a guitar within a hundred-mile radius of SF.

"There's no stagnation. It's a means to keeping the music alive, in fact. I think Californian musicians have consciously devalued the old solo artist and band recording formats. They're redundant. That's one of the reasons why I left England, everything was so regimented. You had to be 'in', or you had to know George personally. In American studios it's totally different.

If you're there, and you hear a part and you've got the balls to say so, then you've got a good chance of playing it. Over here you wonder if you're going to blow your cool by saying, 'Hey, I hear a maraca there.' There's really no boundaries in the Bay Area any more, I can sing with everybody and anybody can come and sing with me."

We walk out into an open quadrangle in the hotel as I prepare to leave. Graham stops in his tracks suddenly.

"That's amazing."

He stares at a washing line, hung with undies.

"Look at that woman's underwear!"

I'm puzzled; Graham sure doesn't seem like any sort of fetishist.

"In America people don't hang out washing," he explains. "It gets stolen."

I wanted to say, "What? While you guys are all harmonising together?" But I hadn't got the heart. ●

"They thought we were crazy": CSNY performing "Long Time Gone" with the host on the *This Is Tom Jones* TV show, LA, September 6, 1969

VALLEY MUSIC LTD/SHUTTERSTOCK

"Have you felt anything resembling bad vibes?"

With Nixon vanquished, solo needs sated and differences settled, CSNY reconvene, first on a Hawaiian yacht, then the road. "All those people who say that we broke up are just a bunch of stupid assholes," NASH tells Roy Carr, but admits, "Fifteen minutes from now it might all end up in a furious fist fight."

Harmonious relations: Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young reunited at the Oakland Coliseum, California, July 13, 1974

GIJSBERT HANEKROOT/GETTY

NME AUGUST 31, 1974

A FEW weeks ago the innumerable record stores that fringe New York's Times Square were having great difficulty in shifting their stock of Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young solo albums, even at the all-time low cheap giveaway price – of $1.98.

This week, with the aforementioned CSNY doing three gigs in town, not only have these stores hiked the price back up to around four bucks, but they've also mobilised extra copies just to keep pace with demand.

Meanwhile, just a couple of blocks across town, Atlantic Records reckon that the new CSNY compilation of Woodstockian oldies should strike gold (even platinum) within days of being shipped.

Despite the recent fluctuation in their respective solo careers, Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young are a hotter property today than they've ever been. Discounting a spot of box office anaemia that caused the postponement of their gig at California's Ontario Motor Speedway, a rough estimate suggests that by the time the lads hit London they will have performed before 1.5 million concertgoers and grossed somewhere in the region of $11 million of the green and crinkly. And as yet there's no telling just how much they'll pick up by way of a bonus on reactivated record sales. In other words, they're filthy with it.

FOR all their faults, Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young are the closest to a Beatle-type phenomenon that America ever produced. And that's taking into account The Monkees. So when, in 1970, they made public the fact that they could no longer tolerate one another, they left a void which no act has proved capable of filling. Though Neil Young remained prolific (for a time) – with Stills not too far behind – on their own the individuals weren't able to generate the same kind of excitement as the basic four-piece unit. Therefore the news of CSNY's reintegration – in the wake of the recent resuscitation of the original Byrds, the Andrews Sisters, Dylan, Clapton and John, Paul, George, Ringo and Bert – marked the zenith of the current fixation with nostalgia; which, in itself, is an indictment of rock's stagnation but a real incentive for The Dave Clark Five to polish the rust off their Vox amps.

The whole shebang was vividly summed up in one brief moment when, during CSNY's appearance at Nassau Coliseum out on Long Island, Neil Young loped up to the microphone and casually enquired, "Would you like to hear a new song or an old song" – to be greeted with the unanimous bellow of, "An old song."

Young then strummed his way gently into the opening bars of "Don't Be Denied", proving that you don't have to serve 15 years on the car-wash to qualify for the comeback trail.

THE group's manager, Elliot Roberts, recently felt the compulsion to state that, in his opinion, His Boys had spent the last few years "pissing in the wind". Whether or not it was this line which inspired the punchline of Neil Young's "Ambulance Blues" is irrelevant. What is important is that Roberts' observation wasn't too far from the truth. Roberts, not the kind of counsellor to suffocate his clients with overprotective paranoia, leaves his four musketeers conspicuously to their own devices as he sits to one side in the enormous room set aside backstage for the circus. He expresses the opinion that, in the light of the recent presidential pussyfooting, it has been a most opportune moment for the band to extract the collective digit.

"The kids," says Roberts, "can identify with the early songs and that particular period in their life that they shared along with Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young. Now that the Nixon regime has come to a halt and things are more or less out in the open, American youth feel that they've come to the end of a very traumatic era.

"All the riots, picketings, sit-ins and student demonstrations now appear to have had some positive effect, and songs like 'Ohio' and 'Chicago' – which, at the time we all thought were just hollow voices in the wind – now take on even more meaning than before."

Over the microphones, CSNY harmonise: "*Tin soldiers and Nixon coming, we're finally on our own*" – and in response, over 18,000 kids jump to their feet to utter an almighty roar.

However, Graham Nash – who looks like he's still trying to thumb a lift back from Yasgur's Farm – refutes the theory that they're filling stadiums from coast to coast purely on a political ticket.

"They haven't just turned out to hear us sing 'Ohio'," he argues, while towelling down his greasy torso following an energetic game of table tennis (he plays at least 20 games each day to keep in trim). "They've come for the music that we're making together – and because I know that they respect us as a band. Yes, they do." Yet he doesn't dismiss that many of the things CSNY wrote and sang about in their back pages still carry a social consciousness. "I suppose with us being on the road the same time as the Watergate affair came to a head had made a lot of people acutely aware of what goes on in government – and, after what's just happened, the future is not completely hopeless."

LUGGING a road crew of somewhere between 60 and 80, the CSNY junket moves from gig to gig like a highly sophisticated military operation. But even five-star generals can make mistakes.

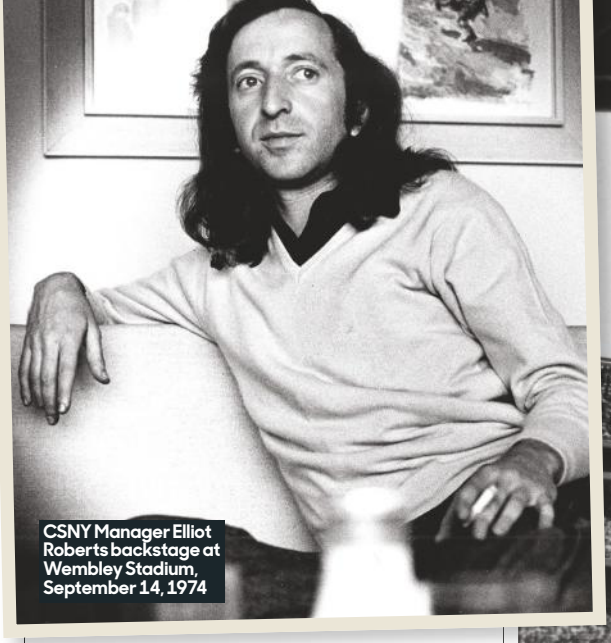
For instance... on the way to Nassau Coliseum, our motorcade came to an abrupt halt right in the middle of the 59th Street Bridge, when Neil Young's GMC Camper – which he is using as both home and transportation for the entire tour – suddenly ran out of fuel.

This mishap held up the nose-to-bumper rush-hour traffic in a humid temperature not far short of 90 degrees. Feelin' Groovy, anyone?... The day before, it was a flat tyre.

THE story is that Crosby, Stills and Nash, and later Young (though John Sebastian was on the shortlist) first pooled their creative resources way back in '69 because as individuals they were sick of having to continually compromise themselves with the immature whims of workmates with overinflated egos.

Though the collaboration looked like the epitome of the new Hippie Utopia, Crosby, Stills, Nash, Young, (Greg) Reeves and (Dallas) Taylor did hint that the thing was in no way binding, but at that time everyone was either too stoned or too involved in being part of the Woodstock generation to notice this smallprint get-out clause – that is, until they actually took up the option to go it alone.

Anyway, the irony of it all is this. Judging by first-hand quotes and eye-witness accounts of dressing room punch-ups, the very egotism (other people's) that brought Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young together was the failing (their own egotism) that prevented them working together up until this very summer.


CSNY Manager Elliot Roberts backstage at Wembley Stadium, September 14, 1974

GIJSBERT HANEKROOT/GETTY (2)

Ballpark figures: Stills, Young, Nash and Crosby on stage in Oakland, California, July 13, 1974

I take Nash to task over the fact. How come in 1970 they sang, "*We can save the world*" – yet couldn't save themselves from fragmenting in a rather embarrassing manner?

Nash, however, adamantly denies that CSNY ever "officially" disbanded.

He explains: "All those people who say that we broke up are just a bunch of stupid assholes. All that actually happened was we didn't record together as a unit... Though if you care to check it out, we all appeared on each other's solo projects and also showed up at each other's concerts to help out. Anyway, we've all grown up a lot since those days, we're more aware of what's going on in each other's heads".

Nash reconsiders the implications for a moment, then gabbles. "Fifteen minutes from now it might all end up in a furious fist fight, but somehow I really don't think it will.

"After this tour there's the album to do, and for all I know we might just decide to go right back on the road and do this thing all over again. And then again we might not. But one thing is certain – we'll be making music together for a long time to come."

Nash set off in search of his shirt and halts en route to speak to Neil Young. "Hey man," he blurts in best Mancalifornian accent, "this is what this band's really all about. We're due on stage in about 20 minutes and suddenly Neil's decided to do 'Southern Man' in the show."

> "One thing is certain – we'll be making music together for a long time"
> **GRAHAM NASH**

As if on cue (10 points to the roadies), acoustic guitars magically appear in the hands of Stills and Nash, and, with Crosby in tow, they gather around Young – who is perched on a high stool inches from the bar – and quickly run through the number a couple of times.

On the subject of Young... a lot of folk in Britain find it hard to believe that the rather wasted and dishevelled person on his last solo tour was in fact Neil Young – favouring a theory that this was an incoherent imposter out to ruin the talented Canadian's reputation.

Watching the "real" Neil cruisin' backstage, laughing and joking, it's impossible to believe that this cheerful chappie is the very same who drove both ardent admirers and critics to the brink of tears and despair.

Neil Young doesn't give interviews – but it's not a prima donna attitude; just that in his own words, "I've really got nothin' to say." On those rare occasions he has broken his rule he says he's never been able to relate to what appeared in print.

"It always reads like someone else instead of me."

Strangely enough, however, Young is obviously intrigued (and maybe envious?) as he watches the way Crosby and Nash sit around chewing the fat with the gentlemen of the press.

And reminiscent of a panhandler outside a stage-door, he slowly approaches our table. "Hi," he intones with nasal clarity.

He's decked out in a white Buick service-station windbreaker, neatly patched blue cords and hides behind a newly cultivated beard and silver-lensed aviator shades. For extra protection, he sports a straw pork-pie hat. "Hi, Neil."

End of interview?

"Actually, I only showed up tonight 'cause I'm looking for girls," he jokes as he sets his sights on the hot buffet. "Hey! Somebody's been sleazin' out on the food!"

All the yummy fried chicken, chips and deep fried onion rings have been devoured.

"I'd sure like some food," he drones, trying to construct a sandwich from the salvage. Food for a song? ➤

On stage, everyone seems hyper-protective when it comes to performing one of Neil's songs.

At the previous evening's marathon Crosby went over to Young to draw his attention to the fact that one of his new songs was receiving a standing ovation.

"Not only are we protective towards Neil," Crosby explains to me, "and show our deep concern when he's performing one of his songs, but we also show this very same attitude towards each other.

"We're not just hanging around waiting for our own solo spots. To tell you the truth," he continues, "we're all knocked out by the way everyone is trying so hard on everyone's material."

"And don't forget," adds Nash, "this is a seven-piece band. Not just four lead singers."

"He's right," agrees Crosby. "Our bass player Tim Drummond and the drummers Russ Kunkel and Joe Lala are equally important to the success of every show."

Back to Young, and Crosby says: "I know for a fact that Neil's real happy up there on stage. Some nights he's jumping around all over the place. If the music's getting him off like that, then that's just great – because Neil's quite a shy person. You've got to know how to bring him out of his shell."

Any fears that Neil Young might be a spent force were banished later that evening. During a workout of a new Young song, "Pushed It Over The End", both Crosby and Nash quickly cleared the decks to allow Stills – brandishing a Gibson Firebird – to demonstrate that he can be a bitch of a guitar player. Then Young squared up to him with a Gretsch White Falcon to trade guitar chores.

Things got so intense that Young tucked his axe tightly into his frail frame, hunched his body and began revving up his right leg – like at any moment he was going to execute a Chuck Berry duck-walk.

"It's not as though they're playing." Crosby theorises. "It's more like they're having a conversation. I mean, like it's been four years since they last held a conversation like that – and they've a helluvah lot to say to one another."

Stills hears that last remark... smiles and affirms.

One thing does seem very certain: Crosby, Stills and Nash are going out of their way to make certain that Young doesn't again experience what's best described as his recent artistic and personal nadir.

On the subject of Neil Young's highly controversial last solo tour, Crosby reflects: "Well, to begin with, I wasn't there to see it so I really don't know precisely what happened."

I fill him in on the sad details.

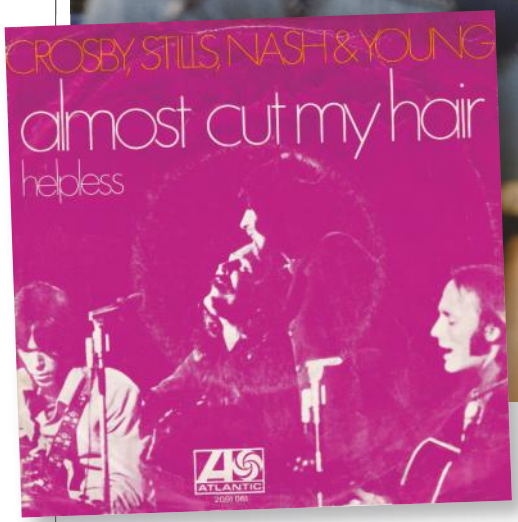
"But I do know that Neil upset and, I guess, disillusioned a lot of people who love him.

"When an audience comes out of a show, they're usually laughing and talking, but as I hear it, there was this deathly silence when Neil's shows emptied out. Apparently, people were in a state of complete shock... They just didn't believe what they'd seen or heard. They'd been hurt and it showed."

During the period of Young's melancholia and what appeared to be an effort to put on the worst show possible – he is reported to have said this to a confidant – Young cut no less than three albums.

Tonight's The Night with Crazy Horse in attendance was, in Elliot Roberts' words "a drunken rock'n'roll album," and remains unreleased. The next, 'Human Highway', apparently didn't measure up to Young's personal expectations and was abandoned in favour of *On The Beach*, which has divided listeners into two opposing factions over its merits.

And the grapevine intimates that songs from 'Human Highway' will be included on a forthcoming Young solo showcase.



PREVIOUS attempts by Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young at a reconciliation seem to have fallen down because their desire to sate personal appetites was totally out of balance with any need for intelligent co-operation.

A reunion in 1971 was thwarted, as was another in 1973. By the time they'd satisfied their hunger with various solo projects they were about as near as they'd ever be to sharing the same stage together – for more than just one impromptu evening.

Emotionally, they all felt that they could relax a little in each other's company without things degenerating into a bar-room brawl. Crosby and Nash, however, had remained bosom pals through thick and thin:

"We're the best friends we have in the whole world," they say of each other. It was really just a matter of tempering the love/hate relationship that had afflicted Stills and Young ever since their Buffalo Springfield days.

That was eventually surmounted, as was a feud that cropped up between Stills and Nash over a woman. And Crosby... oh, he just kept grinning like the amiable hippie he is as he sailed his wooden ship around the Pacific Ocean.

Today the four are tolerant of each other's quests for individuality, freedom of expression and other quirks. Hassles and shout-ups appear to have become almost nonexistent, and ego-tripping a thing of the past. Perhaps the fact that both Stills and Young have become fathers (of boys) has given them a mutual interest and sense of maturity.

At first all are reticent about the problems that prevented them from regrouping much earlier. Crosby and Nash admit that in part all four were to blame, but say they've grown up since 1969.

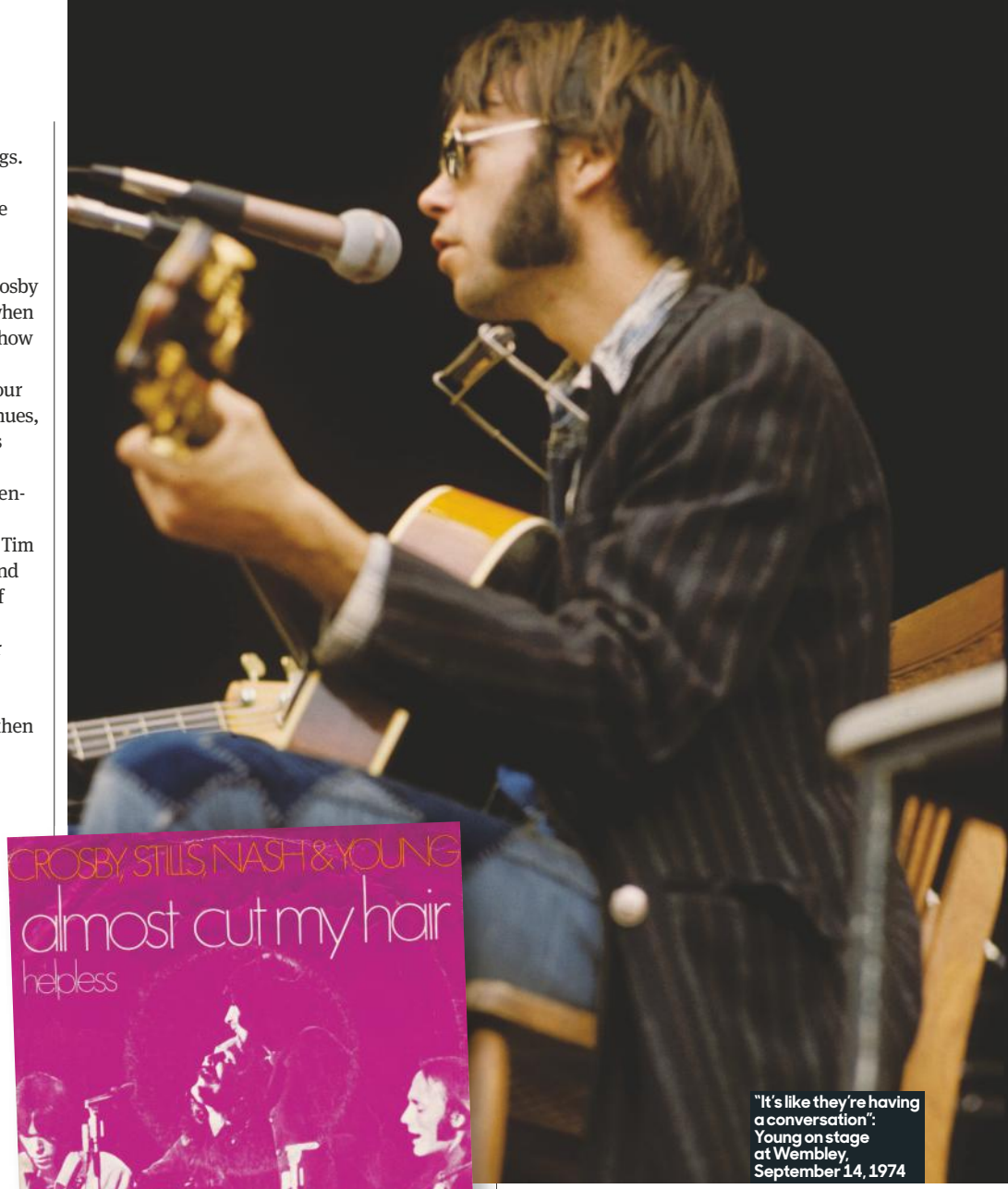
"Look," says Nash, "you saw the show last night and you've been hangin' around with us backstage... Have you felt anything remotely resembling bad vibes, man... Well, have you?"

No.

"And you won't," adds Crosby. "You want to know why?"

Yes please.

"Well, it's simply because of this new-found maturity. All four of us are eager to give the others


"It's like they're having a conversation": Young on stage at Wembley, September 14, 1974

GIJSBERT HANEKROOT/GETTY

more room to do what they do best without being shouted down."

"He's right," Nash continues, "and that's something that you just can't bloody well fake. If we did – and mind, I'm only saying *if* – the kids would have us sussed out.

"We've learned a helluvah lot from this tour, like being more considerate towards each other because we're all secure in who we really are as individuals. The headspace is now evenly balanced."

> "We can hardly stand up when we come off, we're so exhausted"
> **DAVID CROSBY**

The way David Crosby tells it, the eventual regrouping takes on a storyline from an *Archie* comic – with the participants playing the roles of Archie, Betty, Jughead and Veronica.

"Basically," Crosby begins, "It was like this. I decided to take my boat, *The Mayan*, to Lahaina on Maui [*one of the Hawaiian islands*] for some diving and Graham decided to come along because he thought it could be a lotta fun. It was.

"When Stephen heard, he thought, 'Why should they have all the fun?' So he came out to join us.

"Then, when Neil heard, and he thought, 'So why should all those have a good time?' and so as not to miss out he joined us. Before we knew it we were all hanging out on my boat, diving, really getting healthy and having a swell time.

"After a while the guitars came out and we found ourselves playing and singing each other's songs. And that's where it began to take off."

The scene then quickly shifted to Neil Young's secluded ranch at La Honda, San Francisco. But despite the fact that they laid down six new songs – two of which, "Prison Song" and "And So It Goes", appear on Nash's *Wild Tales* collection – a reunion was temporarily shelved.

Stills is once said to have joked that the first time CSNY hit the road it was for the music, the second for the chicks and this time for the greenbacks.

A joke... but it's interesting to note that over the last year or so their individual record sales have drastically dipped to the point where – in Stills case – he sells less than half his usual number. Young can only nudge the half-million mark, whereas his *After The Gold Rush* and *Harvest* accounted for approximately two million copies per album.

Now it has been announced that this tour will gross around $11 million. And the statement appears to haunt the band wherever they go.

"Personally," says Nash. "I don't care if my solo albums only sell a dozen copies. I just want to make my music. It's not what's on the chart but what's in your heart that counts..." he pauses mid-sentence, "'Ere, someone... quick, a pen... that rhymes," he jokes.

However, only the week before he'd said he felt disappointed with the lack of response to his *Wild Tales* album, and that if no-one heard one's album it was a painful blow to the person attempting to communicate.

On stage, however, neither Nash or his compadres seem at all affected. On numbers like "Love The One You're With" and "Pre-Road Downs" they're as tight as a fnurg's klitsch at 20,000 fathoms, while the vocal harmonies on "Wooden Ships" and "Ohio" are as rich and close as the consecutive serial sets of Happy Families.

The intro to each song is greeted with audience jubilation, most noticeably when Crosby performs "Almost Cut My Hair" and "Déjà Vu"; Stills, "Suite: Judy Blue Eyes"; Nash, "Our House" and "Teach Your Children" and everything that Young turns his skilled hands to, though "Helpless, Helpless" and "Ambulance Blues", whined in his best broken-banjo-string voice, won by a head.

"'Ere, if people think we're only back for the bloody money they're mistaken," snorts Nash, who obviously finds talk of money distasteful. "We're on stage for well over three hours... sometimes four, and we put everything we have into each show."

Crosby mumbles: "Some nights we can hardly stand up when we come off stage because we're so exhausted."

Back to Nash. "Now, if we were only doing it for the money we'd have toured long before this. But like I said, it didn't feel right until now.

"Listen, man, nobody forces the kids to come to our shows – but there they are in their thousands each night we play."

"The thing that really impresses me," Crosby gleefully confesses, "is that they're a real straight healthy bunch. No downer freaks or weird heavy dopers in the audience. We don't want that element at our shows.

"I must tell you this," he enthuses. "The other night we played a gig and it rained all day and the kids just stood out in that rain and waited for us. Nobody left. By the time we came on they were soaked to the skin, but they stayed for another four hours and sang along on all the songs.

"Man, that really moved me... I almost cried."

Suddenly Neil Young, guitar in hand, wanders over.

"Hi Neil", says Crosby, "how ya doin'?"

"Oh, I'm just doin' fine."

Young sits down and begins previewing some songs he's been putting together while on the road.

"Hey Neil," Nash interrupts, "why don't you try 'Hawaiian Sunrise'?"

"Alright." And Nash reaches for another guitar. Stills makes it a foursome.

As Young and Nash reach the chorus all four blend their distinctive voices into a mood that's evocative of songs on *After The Gold Rush*.

"That's great," remarks Nash, "and whenever you feel like doing it on stage that's OK with me." Young smiles back shyly and offers, "This is another new one. I really haven't finished it yet... I'll play you what I've got."

This song's hookline of "*I feel like a train carrying a heavy load behind me*" prompts Nash to work out an off-the-cuff harmony. It's right first time. Both singers grin at each other.

"There's a few other songs I wanna do from the old days," says Young, but before he gets side-tracked Crosby intervenes with some almost fatherly advice.

"Hey Neil, don't play any dark shit numbers, you've got so many good numbers to choose from. Just play those things you really want to play and don't waste your energies."

Neil looks up and starts laughing. "OK then."

As quickly as they'd gathered together around the table, they disperse.

After about five minutes, Nash turns to Roberts and enquires: "Hey, where did the rest of the guys go?"

"Oh, didn't I tell you?" Roberts begins, "They're on stage, rehearsing with Garfunkel."

As he leaves the room, Nash looks back at Roberts and, with a deadpan expression, shouts: "You really know how to hurt someone." And he's gone. ●

Graham Nash presses the flesh, Wembley Stadium, September 14, 1974

Friends reunited: Crosby and Young backstage in Oakland, California, July 13, 1974

MICK GOLD/GETTY; GIJSBERT HANEKROOT/GETTY

CROSBY & NASH

Crosby & Nash in the 1970s

RELEASED 1971-1977

Out of the tumult a true brotherhood emerges: long on harmony but a little shorter on songs.

BY MARK BENTLEY

THEY have told the origin story often enough. A chance meeting via a Mamas & Papas recording session, and late-night harmonising sessions at Joni Mitchell's place. It's one of rock's enduring fairy tales, the unlikely, instant connection between the born-free former Byrd and the British beat-popper. Two voices that belonged together, as if they shared DNA.

Crosby was quick to acknowledge that the connection wasn't just musical. "This is gonna sound like a hype – Graham Nash is one of the most highly evolved people on the planet," he told *Rolling Stone* in summer 1970, at CSNY's first schism. "Ask anybody that knows him and they will tell you that he is just one of the major joys in their life."

In autumn 1971, after a clutch of solo efforts from across CSNY, Crosby and Nash found major joy in each other, and in a musical partnership that offered relative solidity throughout the decade. They would tour together, in a short series of intimate gigs as a duo. Just two voices, their guitars and a piano. These were not barroom jams: the venues were showbiz, a dozen dates including Vancouver's Queen Elizabeth Theatre, the Music Hall in Kansas City and Carnegie Hall, before hitting the UK, at the Royal Festival Hall and Manchester Odeon.

As demonstrated by bootleg turned official live retrospective *Another Stoney Evening* (recorded in LA, on October 10, 1971), the tracklist comes with a spoiler. Amid covers of "Déjà Vu", "Wooden Ships", "Man In The Mirror" et al, there are just four new songs between them. It's a theme. While the three Crosby-Nash studio albums of the '70s would be commercially successful, quality new material would be a problem.

Graham Nash David Crosby (1972) is a studio souvenir of that first tour. It's dedicated to mutual muse "Miss Mitchell", and the cover art plays on their personal intimacy. In the original gatefold UK vinyl release, a small die-cut window frames the duo on stage; sleeve photography shows them united in embrace, under the spotlight. The live feel continues in the audio. Included is a tour set piece, Nash's "Blacknotes". "*Put all your fingers on the blacknotes... Sing along, write a song,*" he sings, in smug deconstruction of the creative process. It got a warm audience response, sure. But one listen is enough.

Happily, the rest of the debut showcases the best bits of this union: a miasma of melodies, heart-stop harmonies and fluid, easy-ear songwriting. In "Page 43" – a kind of hippie *Desiderata* – and the keening "Games" you have two of Crosby's finest compositions. "Where Will I Be?" mines the spectral, madrigal vibe of his solo debut. He'd clearly been working on "The Wall Song" for a while – check out the PERRO sessions with Jerry Garcia – and it offers a serpentine groove, and some heavy-comedown lyrics: "*Your breath is scraping your brain into dust...*"

Nash counters with some great stoner pop. Opener "Southbound Train" offers mellow, Young-like vibes. Lead single "Immigration Man" bounces with injustice. "Frozen Smiles" is one of several acerbic Dear Johns the Englishman would pen for his compadres: "*All the faking of your friendship/ Doesn't make it anyway.*" (Nash confirms in autobiography *Wild Tales* that this one was for Stills.)

It's a great headphones album. Musicianship is uniformly excellent, provided by sessioneer supergroup The Section – keyboardist Craig Doerge, guitarist Danny Kortchmar, bassist Leland Sklar, and drummer Russell Kunkel. These guys would become familiar sleevenames on AOR albums through the '70s. Their other brand name – The Mellow Mafia – is more than a clue as to the direction C&N were taking.

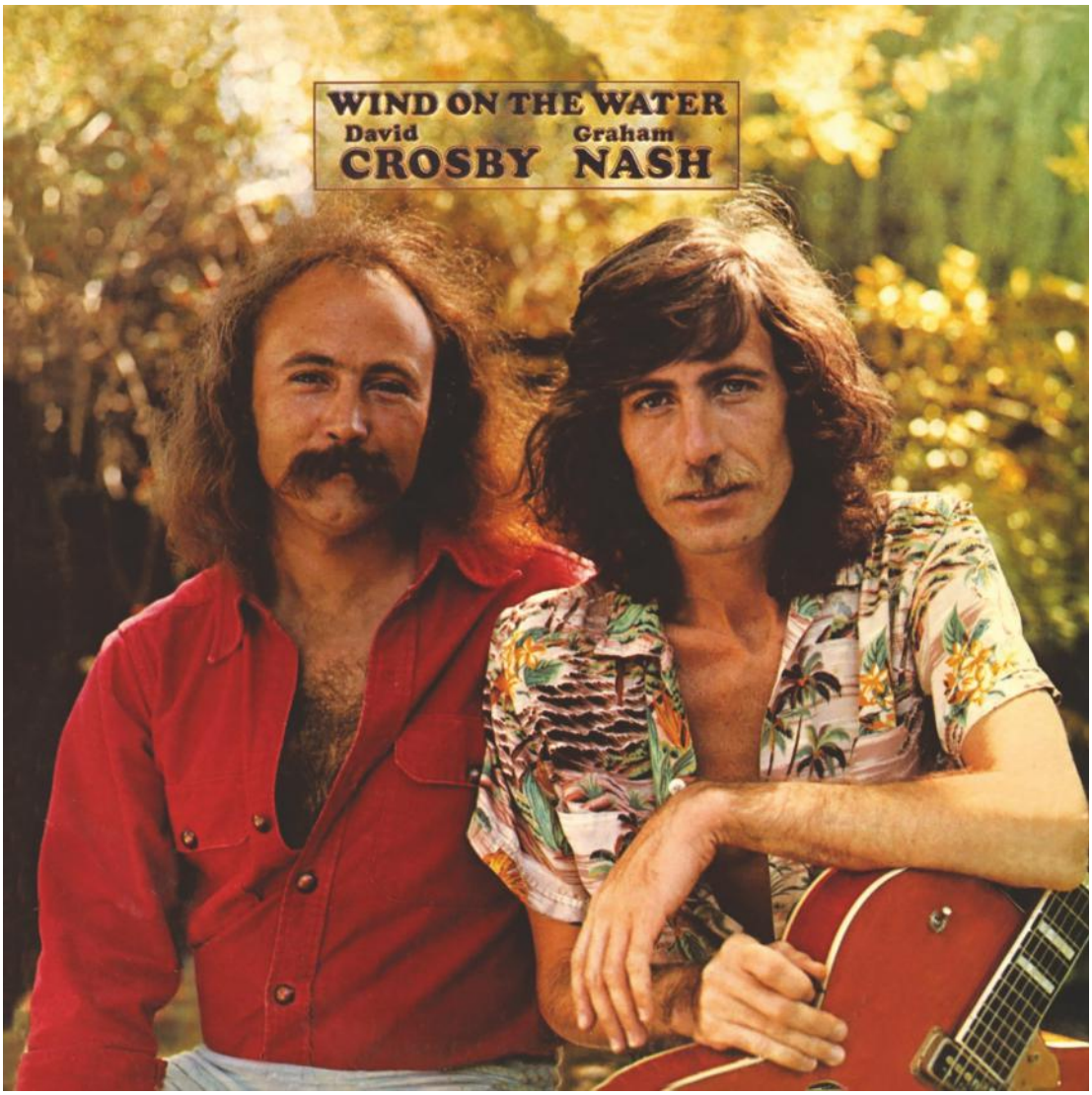
Recalling the '74 tour in Jimmy McDonough's *Shakey*, Neil Young nailed the problem that would define CSN generally, but *Wind On The Water* and *Whistling Down The Wire* specifically. "Last time I played with 'em had been two or three years before that. They hadn't made an album, and they didn't have any new songs. What were they doing? How could they just stop?"

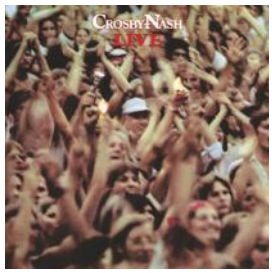
After the attempt for a second CSNY studio album was

CRITICS' VERDICTS

GRAHAM NASH DAVID CROSBY
"Their talk of love and peace in their songs and on stage seems to be less honest than it used to be. They continuously fall into the trap of self-righteousness..." **Mark Plummer, MM, 06/05/1972**

WIND ON THE WATER
"It's not that their sense of melody has deserted them altogether, so much as that the ideas here seem mere fragments of larger ideas..." **Steve Clarke, NME, 18/10/1975**





aborted, Crosby & Nash found easy consolation: a new three-album deal with ABC Records. Side One of 1975's *Wind On The Water* starts brilliantly, it must be said. "Carry Me" is one of the best vocal arrangements across the CSNY canon. Nash's "Mama Lion" – another paean to Joni – is crisp, rocky, memorable. "Bittersweet" is exactly that. In the best Lennon-McCartney style, co-write "Naked In The Rain" blends the Crosby/Nash dialectic into something joyous – two voices, and two creative minds feeding off each other.

Elsewhere, though, mellowness reigns, and quality tails off. While still perfectly listenable – especially with the exquisite steel work of David Lindley as decoration – *Wind On The Water* is, well, a bit windy. You get cod-country ("Cowboy Dreams"), serene self-importance ("Homeward") and paint-by-numbers soundalikes ("Take The Money And Run" shares cadence and melody with "Immigration Man"). Worthy eco anthem "To The Last Whale" made waves at the time as a live favourite. Four decades later, it sounds like a parody.

1976's *Whistling Down The Wire* owes its existence to another CSNY meltdown. When C&N prioritised this LP over a reunion, their vocals were wiped from the album that would become *Long May You Run*. Bad move? Well, a number of songs left over from the *Wind On The Water* sessions made the cut here. And while "Time After Time," "JB's Blues," and "Marguerita" are serviceable – the latter Nash composition recalls the cicada feel of mid-'70s Dylan – they are atmospheric rather than compelling.

Single "Spotlight" is a middling mid-tempo rocker, little more. Elsewhere, there is mediocrity, lyrically and musically. "Mutiny" takes another pop at who-know-you, while closer "Out Of The Darkness" informs us that "*The sands of time are slowly shifting*". Crosby's grunty, bizarre, lyric-free "Dancer" at least makes an impression. It's almost prog, in the way of The Eagles' "Journey Of The Sorcerer".

The headline news? While their '70s work has some pretty high highs, it has low points too. That ABC contract would be honoured not by another studio effort, but by *Crosby-Nash Live* (backed, inevitably, by The Section) and now-deleted comp *The Best Of*.... The fact that three of those 10 "best" songs are culled from separate Crosby and Nash solo albums – and none of these three records as a duo – is a deft, if accidental, critique. ●

> While their '70s work has some high highs, it has low points too

TRACK MARKS

Another Stoney Evening
GRATEFUL DEAD/ARISTA, 1998
(recorded live, 1971)
★★★★

Graham Nash David Crosby
ATLANTIC, 1972
★★★★
Produced by: David Crosby, Graham Nash, Bill Halverson
Recorded at: Wally Heider Studio 3, LA
Highest chart position: UK 13; US 4

Wind On The Water
ABC, 1975
★★★
Produced by: David Crosby, Graham Nash, Stephen Barncard
Recorded at: Rudy Records, San Francisco; Sound Labs and Village Recorders, LA
Highest chart position: UK – ; US 6

Whistling Down The Wire
ABC, 1976
★★
Produced by: David Crosby, Graham Nash, Stephen Barncard
Recorded at: Rudy Records, San Francisco; Sound Labs, LA
Highest chart position: UK – ; US 26

Crosby-Nash Live
ABC, 1977
★★★
Produced by: David Crosby, Graham Nash, Don Gooch, Stephen Barncard
Recorded live: September 7, 1975 – September 11, 1976
Highest chart position: UK – ; US –

"The year of the singer-songwriter, again"

In the absence of *Human Highway*, DAVID CROSBY and GRAHAM NASH release *Wind On The Water*. But what's the future for the "magical" CSNY? "There are times when it's good to do it," Nash tells Steve Turner, "and there are times when it's not."

NME NOVEMBER 1, 1975

IT'S hard to pin down the 1970s. We're already half-way through and still there's no significant characteristic about which we'll be able to reminisce in the Naughty Nineties, or whatever. There's nothing typically "'70s".

Fashion, film and music, graphics... they've all been plundering past decades for their inspiration. Even the most now of artists, David Bowie, achieved his position by taking his image from an imaginary future.

But the 1960s, now there was a decade. Everything was so orderly in its progression, it was as though the whole period was sponsored by some ingenious director and that it was designed to have a beginning, a middle and an end.

And what's more – people were supposed to have been getting better, slowly evolving into peaceful, loving beings.

Having partially demolished class barriers, expanded our consciousness, got in tune with The Infinite and found The Truth About Politics, we were ready for Woodstock all year round.

But, as Mr Lennon said at the end of that fantasy decade, the dream is over; we gotta get down to so-called reality. ➤

KOH HASEBE/SHINKO MUSIC/GETTY IMAGES

Cowboys of dreams: Crosby and Nash at Nippon Budokan, Tokyo, December 1975

CROSBY, Stills, Nash & Young – sorry about this – were the first post-Beatles band to become a major source of inspiration and enlightenment to the, ahem, Youth Culture.

Having just made the '60s they'd missed out in a big way in the fashion, sex, dope and religion stakes as far as important issues went, but they managed to capture the feel of the times with their concentration on political and social issues – in their raps in between songs even if not in the songs themselves.

Their instant recording of "Ohio" after the Kent State shootings captures this feel perfectly.

Their accumulated personal histories helped a lot too. Like many of us they were true children of the '60s, moulded by its every fashion and trend. Nash had the near-Beatle background of a northern England city, beat clubs, looking good, and out-and-out pop music.

He also had the tendency to grab on to the latest thing – informing English pop readers that psychedelic meant "mind expanding" back in 1966 and telling them that it would be the next rage... and wearing granny glasses and ridiculous off-the-peg kaftans during his last days as a Hollie.

Young and Stills had the aura of having been the major part of a cultish Californian band at a time when it had been very important to be part of a Californian band – cultish or not. And then there was Crosby who'd after all been A Byrd – co-written "Eight Miles High", got himself a reputation for screwing and arguing politics and looked like every indecent American hippie should look.

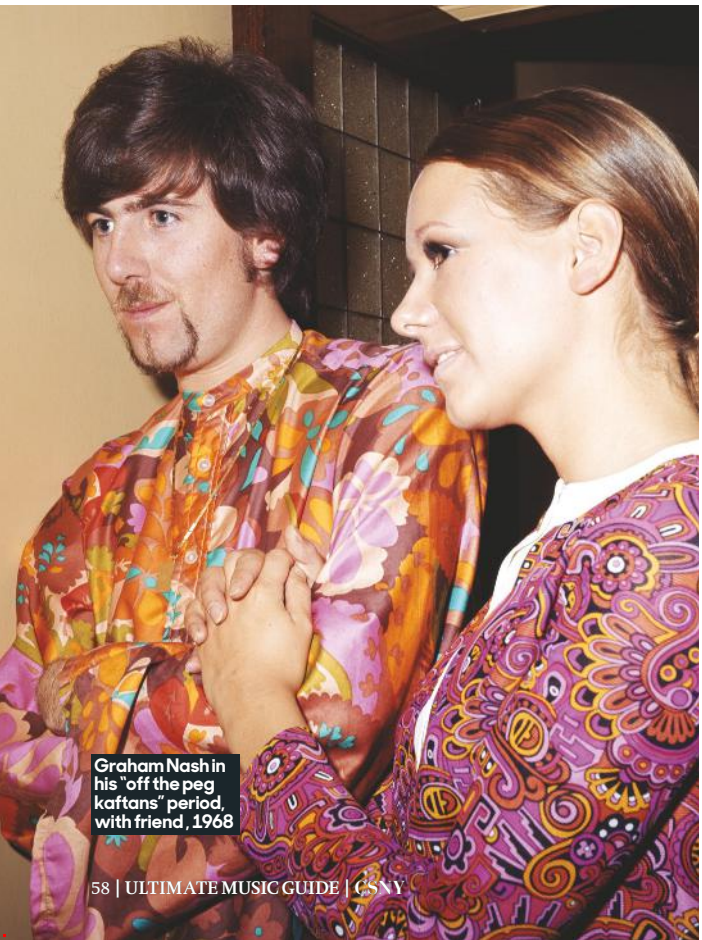
But now it's those indefinable 1970s. Everything we feared about American politics has been proved true but the major criminals are still just enjoying the publicity and the publishers' advances.

The bombings in North Vietnam have stopped but there have been 180 bombings in California so far this year. The atmosphere in the once radical campus of Berkeley, California, seems to be one of apathy – people are content just to have their man (or woman), their dope and their education and then be left alone. Rock music once a threat to the status quo is now as innocuous as muzak.

David "Almost Cut My Hair" Crosby, and Graham "We Can Change The World" Nash, don't feel this way about things. Strange, really, because their new album *Wind On The Water* serves as a good illustration of my thesis. Two of the songs could be seen to be social observations ("Fieldworker" about migrant workers and "Wind On The Water", which discusses the slaughter of whales), but the rest are totally introverted and written in such shrouded language as to avoid any true communication of what sentiment stimulated the song.

Byrd boy: Crosby at Monterey Pop, June 17, 1967

MARK AND COLLEEN HAYWARD/REDFERNS; MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES



Graham Nash in his "off the peg kaftans" period, with friend, 1968

On first playing the album I couldn't believe that two men who'd gained acceptance for their vision of the world had ended up writing such trash lyrics. Crosby certainly could never be accused of being a tuneful man and so it's assumed that part of his attraction is the content of his songs. But, whichever way I listen to it, I just can't see any glimmer of either poetry or perception in lines such as: "*And I once loved a girl/She was younger than me/Her parents kept her locked up in their life/ And she was crying at night/ And she was wishing she could be free...*" etc, etc.

Or, even more absurdly: "*On the one side truth towers like a cliff/On the other side love dangles by a thread.*"

Nash, the self-confessed "simple man", is also no acute observer of life. ("*There's a hole in my destiny/And I'm out on the brink*"), but he does compensate by writing the occasional tune worth a replay. What the two of them have, though, are great harmonies and a diminishing aura.

But Crosby and Nash, however, don't quite see things my way. Crosby, dressed in cut-offs and a striped T-shirt, lays back in his seat down in the bungalow he and Nash are renting in LA during rehearsals and tells me that he's not at all discouraged with the way things are going with the generation that could change the world.

Nash, looking distinctly haggard and wasted, comes in on the conversation: "It has all borne fruit," he says. "In this last generation, the American people have marched on the streets and physically stopped a war."

"Even though it took us 10 years instead of two," adds Crosby. "In '67 we thought we'd all stop that war in about two years and it took us six or eight years instead, but I think everybody felt that this was the first time the American people had actually forced the American government to respond to us.

"But there's still the unrealised shame of having failed the world and not knowing what to do about it... What disappears in this view of things is the ground of community, the felt sense of collective responsibility for the fate of each separate other... The self replaces community, relation, neighbour, chance or God. Looming larger every moment, it obliterates everything around it that might have offered it a way out of its pain."

Crosby muses on the point momentarily. "I think most of the people who get into those things are more than turning inwards away from a society which they don't think that they can pull together. They're actually just lost – straight-out lost. I don't know how you feel, but I feel as if somebody left me alone out here wandering around in a meat suit with no instruction book.

"I have no idea, man. When I got here they didn't tell me 'tab A' or 'slot B' or anything. I had to figure out what was going on and I think most people feel the same way. Most people are quite lost and quite confused – particularly in this country. I think a lot of people are just looking to find a rationale with which to deal with themselves. Some set of values that they can relate to. And they frantically go out and try the Mahagoogo of Whatsits or the 13-year-old perfect muffin or ESXFMLOQ – the Two Week Wonder Course.

"They'll try them all. They'll try Reverend Ike for Godsakes – so I mean they'll try it all! And I think it's mostly just being lost. Just... All The Lonely People. Same ones."

AND so onwards. Didn't they both feel that music – rock music – no longer played a central part in an evolving counterculture? No, they didn't feel this. Music was always an important part of any culture. Illustrations ranging from the Brandenberg Concerto, Glenn Miller and African tribal drumming are given as evidence.

OK. So where are the new songwriters that are capturing the feel of today and coming to grips with its questions? Crosby reels off a list of his friends' names – Joni Mitchell, Dylan, Neil Young, James Taylor... "I'd like to include us," he adds, "but I picked several of my favourites there."

But there are no new people? "Oh yes there are.

Sofa so good: Crosby and Nash in Tokyo, December '75

If you haven't heard JD Souther then there's one you haven't heard of who I'll tell you is going to be as heavy as any of us. There's always one or two that come along."

In actual fact he does mention Jackson Browne, which is good because certainly Browne and the Eagles say more about living in LA in 1975 than anything on *Wind On The Water*.

Maybe that's because they're closer to the heart of things than Crosby and Nash, who both live up in San Francisco and seem to circulate among a world populated with other songwriters. What possible inspiration and insight can these social commentators get when their lives are lived out amongst other social commentators all with their everyday problems of buying homes and boats, coping with their egos and being chauffeur-driven? Small wonder their vision gets narrower because their range of experience gets more exclusive and more removed from that of their potential audience.

"This year, though," says Crosby, "is going to be the year of the singer-songwriter again because Mitchell's going to come out again, Paul Simon's going to come out again, Paul and Arthur [*Garfunkel*] are going to come out again, James is going to come out again. Look at James's last album – *Gorilla*, man... if he isn't one of the half-dozen best singer-songwriters in the world I'm Napoleon.

"I think Dylan, too. You've got to say *Blood On The Tracks* is just... a powerful record, man. I popped that record open, man, and I felt as if he had jumped out of the thing and grabbed me by the lapels. I call that strong stuff, you know. And I know that Mitchell's got one of the same power that she's about to drop on everyone's brains. And I know that Neil has the same power. And I know Paul Simon has the same power that he's about to drop on everybody's brain. Carole's got one just ready to come out (man). It's one of the best records she ever made (man) and I'm not kidding. It's got Goffin-King songs on it. She's so good I can't believe it. She just stuns me."

At this point Nash joins in.

"So, this year, people that make contact with people in terms of songs and writing down familiar experiences will be coming back. I feel it immensely strongly. David and I have felt it for the last two to three months, man."

It's actually somewhat coincidental that Crosby and Nash should be back together recording in this "year of the singer-songwriter", because *Wind On The Water* is more or less the result of Crosby/Stills/Nash/Young not coming together to make 'Human Highway' – their proposed third studio album – rather than a calculated move to get involved in what they have perceived as a trend.

> "CSNY is very special to David and I. It's a very magical group"
>
> **GRAHAM NASH**

"We spent a couple of years holding back some of our best material waiting to see if we were going to be making a CSNY album or not," explains Crosby. "So we did waste a lot of time. We were encouraged by that tour to think that we might be able to work it out with each other in the studio..."

"...And it didn't work out that way, so we concentrated for five or six months on this," says Nash. "So it has only taken five or six months but it's been two-and-a-half years.

"CSNY is very special to David and I. It's a very magical group that has great potential for contacting people. It was a great communicating power and we've always wanted to do that almost as a primary objective, but since it was unable to work out then our primary objective was David and I and the communication that we could create ourselves."

"I think CSNY is still one of the most powerful musical chemistries around, but there are times when it's good to do it and there are times when it's not. This is definitely a period of time when Graham and I are doing what satisfies us so well and so satisfyingly that we really are not interested in doing anything else. Frankly, we've been getting off so hard for the last few months that it could take a great deal to interest us to go in any other direction." ●

KOHHASEBE/SHINKO MUSIC/GETTY IMAGES

THE STILLS-YOUNG BAND

Long May You Run

RELEASED SEPTEMBER 20, 1976

A new CSNY album? Alas no – instead Stephen and Neil shoot for, but miss, the "spirit of Springfield".

BY ROB HUGHES

NOBODY fucks up quite like CSNY. Either side of 1974's 'Doom Tour', the foursome had two bites at recording a successor to *Déjà Vu*, but both occasions were marred by the kind of verbal feuding that was fast becoming a ritual whenever they shared a room. The proposed *Human Highway* was thus left to fester while David Crosby and Graham Nash signed a deal with ABC, leaving Stephen Stills and Neil Young to go their separate ways.

The break wasn't quite as clear as it suggested, however. Young had formed a new iteration of Crazy Horse for 1975's *Zuma*, but he found himself drawn back to Stills as the year wore on. He pitched up at a handful of Stills' West Coast gigs unannounced, a mini-reunion that climaxed with a particularly inspired Young cameo at LA's Pauley Pavilion in November, when the two traded licks like the '60s stage warriors of old. Stills was little short of euphoric. "The spirit of the Springfield is back!" he yelled to the crowd.

The good vibes extended into the new year, when Stills and Young, apparently in salute to the 10th anniversary of Buffalo Springfield's formation, entered Criteria Studios in Miami to start laying down some ideas. Even the distraction of a Crazy Horse tour of Europe and Japan didn't dampen Young's enthusiasm for working with his old bandmate again. By the time he returned to the States, for a proposed second leg of the tour, he ditched Crazy Horse and resumed working with Stills instead.

Backed by Stills' touring band, the LP began gathering momentum in the spring of 1976. Young was evidently in a conciliatory mood, inviting along Nash and Crosby to add harmonies to some of the songs. The prospect of a CSNY reunion, however, soon hit the buffers. Rushing to meet the deadline for their own *Whistling Down The Wire*, Nash and Crosby were forced to leave the Miami sessions and fly back to Los Angeles.

Young and Stills, meanwhile, had their own time constraints. With an album to finish and a tour already booked for June, the pair decided to wipe all trace of Nash and Crosby from the master tapes. The latter, understandably, were furious. Nash told *Crawdaddy* that he would never work with Stills or Young again. "The last thing I want is to have Graham Nash and David Crosby as enemies," Stills was left to explain to Cameron Crowe in *Rolling Stone*. "But this Stills/Young album... we just had to do it ourselves this time. No Richie Furays, no David and Grahams, no nobody between us." CSNY, it seemed, had been sacrificed in the name of expediency.

Such questionable behaviour may have been forgiven had the resulting album been a masterpiece. But *Long May You Run* was anything but. Nor was it quite the full collaboration that The Stills-Young Band moniker promised. Both men worked separately on their respective tunes, rather than writing in tandem. With each singing lead over their own creations, the overall effect is of two individual projects somewhat clumsily stitched together.

The only unifying characteristic is the sheer ordinariness of

CRITICS' VERDICTS

"There's one song where Stills and Young actually function as equal partners. The rest of the album gives you four songs from each of them and effectively demonstrates that their music has developed in such different directions that they really don't have enough common ground any more to make joint recordings a viable proposition."
Charles Shaar Murray, NME, 18/09/1976

TRACK MARKS

1. Long May You Run ★★★★
2. Make Love To You ★★
3. Midnight On The Bay ★★
4. Black Coral ★★
5. Ocean Girl ★★
6. Let It Shine ★★★
7. 12/8 Blues (All The Same) ★★★
8. Fontainebleau ★★★★
9. Guardian Angel ★★★

Label: Reprise
Produced by: Stephen Stills, Neil Young, Tom Dowd, Don Gehman
Recorded at: Criteria Studios, Miami
Personnel: Stephen Stills (vocals, guitars, piano), Neil Young (vocals, guitars, piano, harmonica, string synthesiser), Jerry Aiello (organ, piano), George "Chocolate" Perry (bass, backing vocals), Joe Lala (percussion, backing vocals), Joe Vitale (drums, flute, backing vocals)
Highest chart position: UK 12; US 26

most of the songs. Indeed, at times the protagonists seem locked in an unspoken contest to see who can outdo the other in terms of sheer torpor. Stills plays the bruised romantic on "Make Love To You" – a forgettable five minutes of soft-rock balladeering with the thinnest of organ solos. It's immediately followed by the bloodless "Midnight On The Bay", one of the least demanding songs in Young's entire canon. With its sleepy evocations of sailboats and ocean breezes, it can't pass quickly enough.

The coastal theme continues through the wimpy jazz-pop of Stills' "Black Coral" and Young's woeful "Ocean Girl", with its faint Caribbean sway and talk of "*drinkin' bananas from long tall glasses in the open air*". Whatever magic Stills and Young managed to conjure on stage the previous year had all but dissipated in the studio.

That said, *Long May You Run* isn't quite the disaster that some would have you believe. The title track is certainly worthy of better company. Opening with wistful harmonica, Young's chugging tale is a nostalgic elegy to the 1948 Buick Roadmaster hearse (nicknamed 'Mort') that he drove around Canada in the early '60s. With its "*chrome heart shining in the sun*", the car eventually conked out in Blind River, Ontario, an episode alluded to in the final verse. Unlike the vehicle, "Long May You Run" would survive into old age, with Young performing it on the final episode of *The Tonight Show With Conan O'Brien* in 2010, a month before he played it during the closing ceremony of the Winter Olympics in Vancouver.

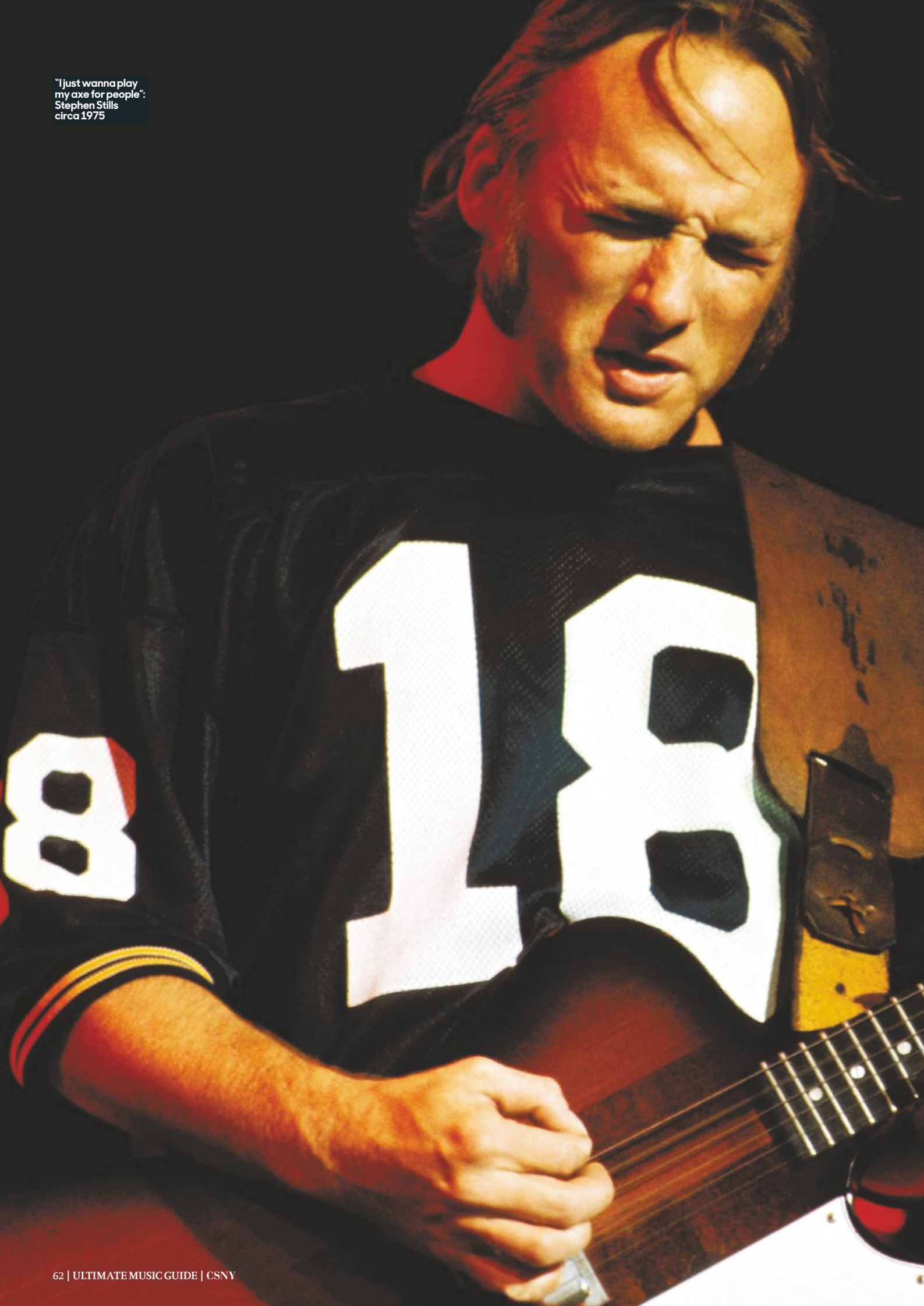
> Not quite a full collaboration, both men worked separately on their tunes

The album actually sparks into gear on Side Two. Young's "Let It Shine", featuring another car reference, at least attempts to quicken the pace. And when Stills busies himself with artful guitar licks over a circling boogaloo riff on "12/8 Blues (All The Same)", you wonder where he's been all this time.

The other great moment is "Fontainebleau", in which Young relocates the troubled, gnarly vistas of *On The Beach*. This prowling slow blues is the closest that he and Stills get to rocking out, their restraint making it all the more impactful.

STILLS and Young took the band out on the road in the US that summer, but the tour soon lost its lustre. Old niggles began to surface. After three weeks, Young reached crisis point en route to a show in Atlanta, telling his bus driver to go the opposite way instead. He left Stills to complete the dates on his own, breaking the news via telegram: "Dear Stephen, funny how some things that start spontaneously end that way. Eat a peach. Neil."

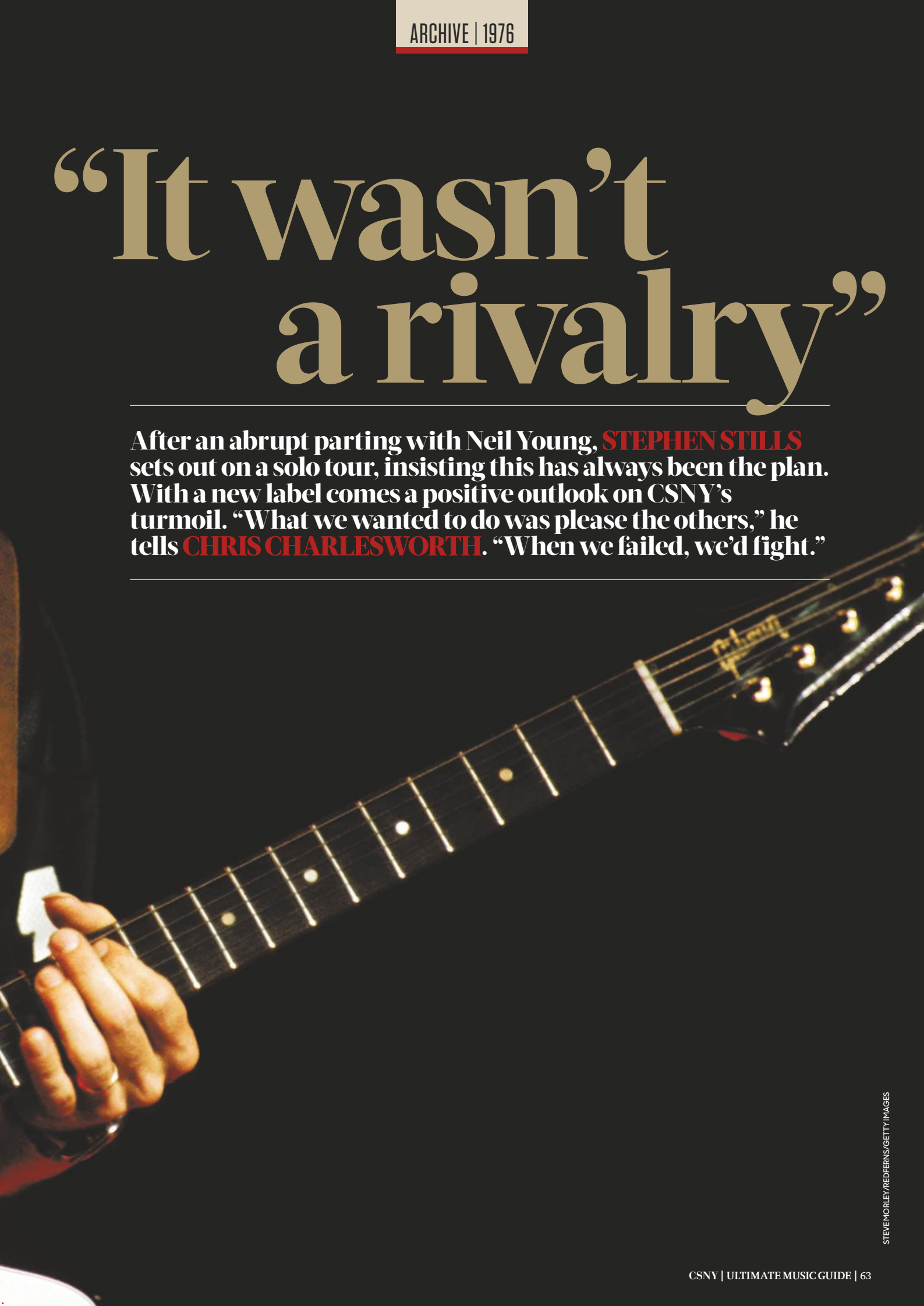
The official explanation for Young's departure was a throat infection. Once again, the CSNY axis was in utter disarray. Stills was surprisingly diplomatic in the wake of the tour debacle, maintaining that he'd learned a great deal and "had a lot of good times... I'm just not going to let this set me back." His next task was to win back the trust of Nash and Crosby. ●



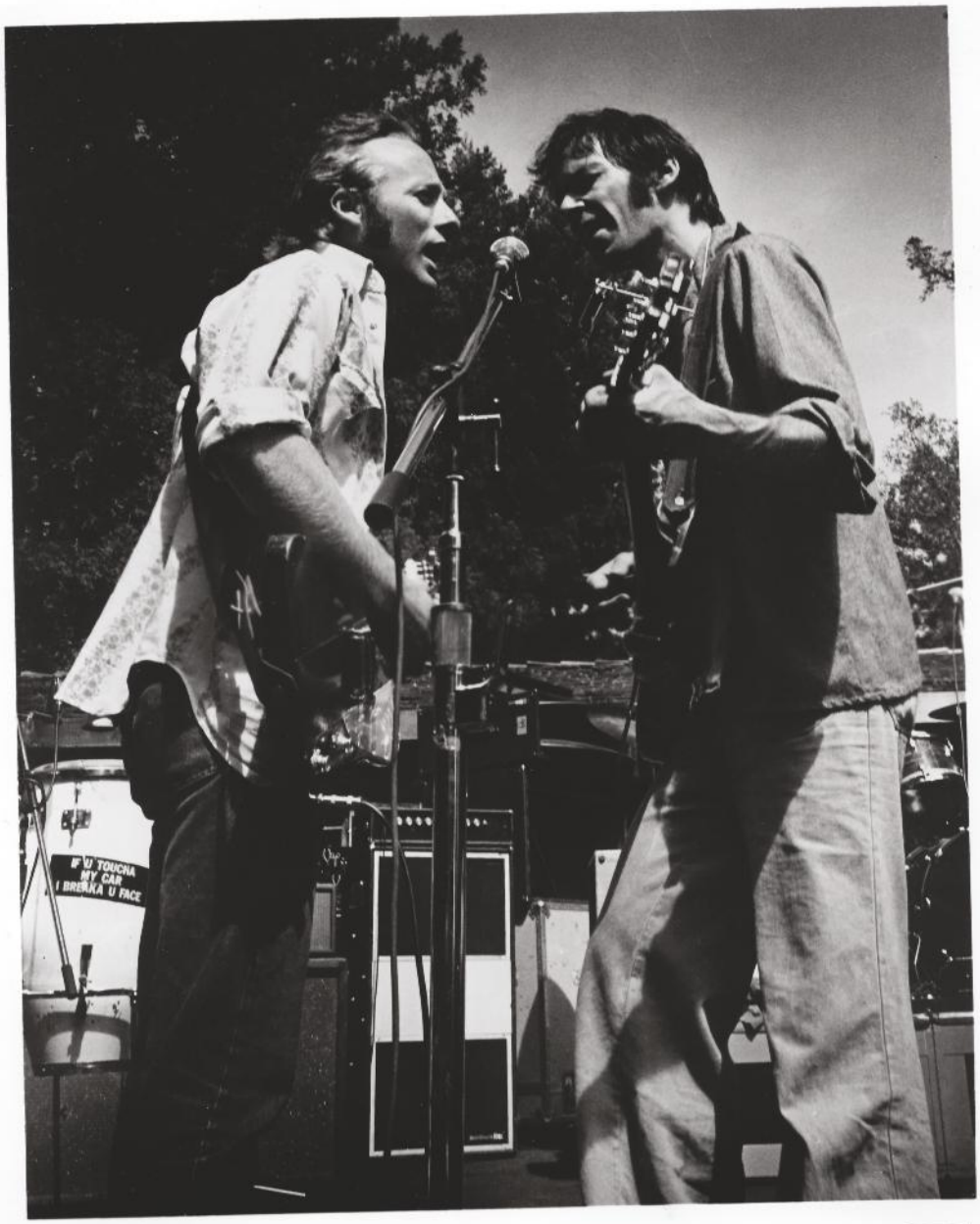
"I just wanna play my axe for people": Stephen Stills circa 1975

"It wasn't a rivalry"

After an abrupt parting with Neil Young, STEPHEN STILLS sets out on a solo tour, insisting this has always been the plan. With a new label comes a positive outlook on CSNY's turmoil. "What we wanted to do was please the others," he tells CHRIS CHARLESWORTH. "When we failed, we'd fight."



STEVE MORLEY/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES



MELODY MAKER NOVEMBER 6, 1976

"DO you have a brother? If you had, you'd know there'd be a sibling rivalry in the family between two brothers. You'd row about it, but because you're a family you'd stick together... and maybe six months would pass, but you'd be back again, wouldn't you? You can't cut off a brother."

Stephen Stills was using the metaphor to explain how things stand with relationships between himself, Neil Young, David Crosby and Graham Nash, and he's being very sincere.

The point he is making is that no matter how many harsh words are spoken, no matter how much dirty laundry is washed in public and no matter how many reports of irredeemable splits appear in newspapers, they will always be together in some form or another. Tempers may fly, he says, but far too much water has flowed under the bridge for them ever to cast each other off completely.

Right now Stephen Stills has no partners to change. He's touring the US completely solo, just him, six guitars, a banjo and a piano plus his voice.

When that happens he checks into a hotel for the day, closes the curtains and sleeps away the daylight hours.

"I've always known that I've been capable of it, but I've never done it. Right at the moment I'm between bands and it seemed like the thing to do. I think, though, that I'm gonna get a bass player and drummer to come along with me, too. We're doing a lot of colleges, so I'll need them. In theatres I can carry this very, very easily, but in basketball joints the kids... Well, for the kids it's football season, homecoming... They want to get up, you know. I can do it, but let's say I'm indulging myself.

"The whole set is with acoustic guitars and piano, so I'm thinking in these bigger places... Hell, where's my electric guitar? I'm just playing whatever appeals to me... I start with three songs and go from there, whatever I want. I dunno what audiences think... Sometimes they're drunked up and want some rock'n'roll, but I'm making sure the promoters let the audiences know that it's just me."

The accent, then, is on the guitar playing? "Well, I worked so much live last year that I actually started to get pretty good at playing the guitar. I like to play guitar, like lead guitar for a change and I began playing things that were way over my head. On acoustic guitar, well that's one thing, but on electric guitar there are a whole lot of players who are better than me. I think I play real good rhythm, and I fingerpick good.

"I just get out there with six guitars, a banjo and a dobro, plus a 12-string and maybe one little electric guitar for the last number. I even have my music book with me at the piano in case I forget the words or something. Hell, I'm not proud."

The last time Stills toured the US was this summer, but the tour, with Neil Young, was soon aborted, apparently because Young's voice was giving trouble. As ever, though, there were reports of arguments between the two principals. Stills nods grimly.

"He got to oversinging a little bit and maybe there was too much pressure. It was all so sudden that I don't know, but whatever happened was cool. Neil stopped the tour very suddenly, just cold like that, but up until then it had been going great.

"He got me in the dressing room before a gig and said... 'All right, man, you're holding back. I wanna see you get out there and hit it more'... so I did so. Jesus... nobody on the road in the country was doing better business except Elton and Aerosmith, but who are Aerosmith? I haven't even heard their records. I must be getting old, but these groups come and go every day."

The Young/Stills tour followed recording sessions in Miami that resulted in the Stills-Young Band's *Long May You Run* album released just two months ago. Stills denies the stories that it was originally intended as a Crosby, Stills, Nash And Young album.

"No, that was wrong. It started out to be just the two of us, but during the sessions Neil had to go to Japan. On the way back from Japan he stopped in California and began hanging out with David and Graham. Then he suggested that all four of us make an album together, but that wasn't right because by that time we'd got all the tracks and half the singing done already."

"Listen... David and Graham came down to Miami but they had an album of their own to do, so they had to go back to California. I thought... wait a minute, if we're going to do this, if we're

going to do a CSNY album again, then let's do it properly. You guys go finish your own album and Neil and me will do this and, when all this is finished, then we'll get together again. If we were going to do one together, we'd start together at the beginning and not half-way through.

"Hell, there was all that talk about Graham and me fighting but that's no big deal. Neil went off into seclusion, but that's no big deal either. He just gets that way.

"I was on the phone with Graham last night and he asked me whether I'd seen some of the things he said about me. I said I had and that I thought it was some of the funniest stuff ever written. There was something about Graham wanting to punch me in the nose, but that's so ridiculous. It's all so petty, but the important thing is that they [*Crosby & Nash*] had a very successful tour and an album that was great. I saw them in LA and they were just fantastic. I went out and did a song with them at the end and it was all just really nice."

The tracks on the Stills/Young album suggested they had been written whilst in Florida. "Yeah... Neil is a pretty immediate sort of a cat. My songs on that album were written somewhat before but Neil's were mostly done there. My 'water' song, the one about diving ["*Black Coral*"] was actually written after I'd gotten into some very deep diving. I have been down 288 feet.

"For Neil it was a departure from some of his darker moments, mainly because we had a great time and looked forward so much to going in the studio. I think it was very educational for me and him both because we picked up on what was right about the way we each recorded and also corrected some of the things we had been doing wrong.

"Neil had me going for the guitar parts at the same time as we recorded the backing track... the way we used to have to do it. We did that album live in the studio with very little overdubbing at all."

When his throat healed, Young began rehearsing for another tour with Crazy Horse – scheduled to begin midway through November – and Stills found himself alone. It was the time, he decided, to try out a solo tour.

"I didn't plan to do it this year. It was something that I kept saying I'd do later on, something I kept putting off because I thought I could always do at one stage. When Neil split – he'd been planning all along to do a tour with Crazy Horse later this year – I had to do something, so... Well, it was right for my own acoustic thing.

"I did three shows, two in theatres and one at a college, and after the college show I thought... not quite. If they want to boogie I can't stop them. So I'm getting a bass player and drummer for the bigger shows. They'll only do five or six songs at the end, so it'll still be basically me.

"I've gotta walk out on the stage and get myself going all by myself. So long as I know what the first three songs are, I'm OK. After that... well, so long as I've made it that far the show will be all right. I don't think I want a band, a big band any longer."

Earlier this year Stills had agreed to do a European tour that would include a date at Cardiff Castle – a date that was advertised in the press but cancelled at relatively short notice. According to Stills, it was the opportunity to record with Young in Miami that caused the cancellation.

I told him he was advertised to play a big outdoor show in Cardiff. "That's news to me," he replied, seemingly ignorant of whatever was planned in the UK. "I know I have to go over there because that time, when I cancelled, it was really a little close to the recording date to cancel, but it wasn't right at the last minute.

> "We're all too sensible to give up thoughts of getting together again"
> **STEPHEN STILLS**

"But look, if Neil was ready to record, I had to go for it. Before we did that album he had a whole tour of the States planned with Crazy Horse and he ditched that. We just decided to go for it because we were excited about it. We all were excited about it, David and Graham, too.

"We're all too sensible to give up thoughts of getting together again. We're like brothers and we have tiffs. It's always been like that with me and Graham and David and Neil. Sometimes we'll get mad at one or the other and blah blah away, but six months later we'll meet and... Hey, you know, we'll say, 'Good to see you, what's going on?' But that's all ancient history.

"In any band, a lot of the internal bickering is directly proportional to the pressure. We never competed with each other as much as people thought. We used that energy in an entirely different way. What we wanted to do was please the others and many times when we failed, we'd fight. It wasn't a rivalry so much as wanting to please each other, so everybody got super-critical of themselves."

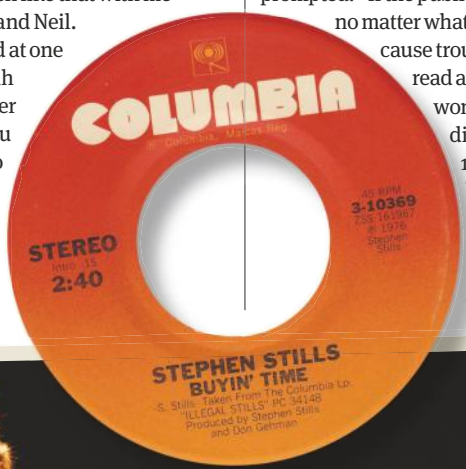
Stills admits that he is currently taking a look at his career and taking stock. "I'm not as good at being a star as I am at being a guitar player," he said after some thought. "There are certain things about my career, my job if you like, that I don't like at all. I recognise the other part of this job, the part that isn't the music, and some of it is a little distasteful to me. Some people can pull that off perfectly, but I... Well, I don't look on myself as that sort of person.

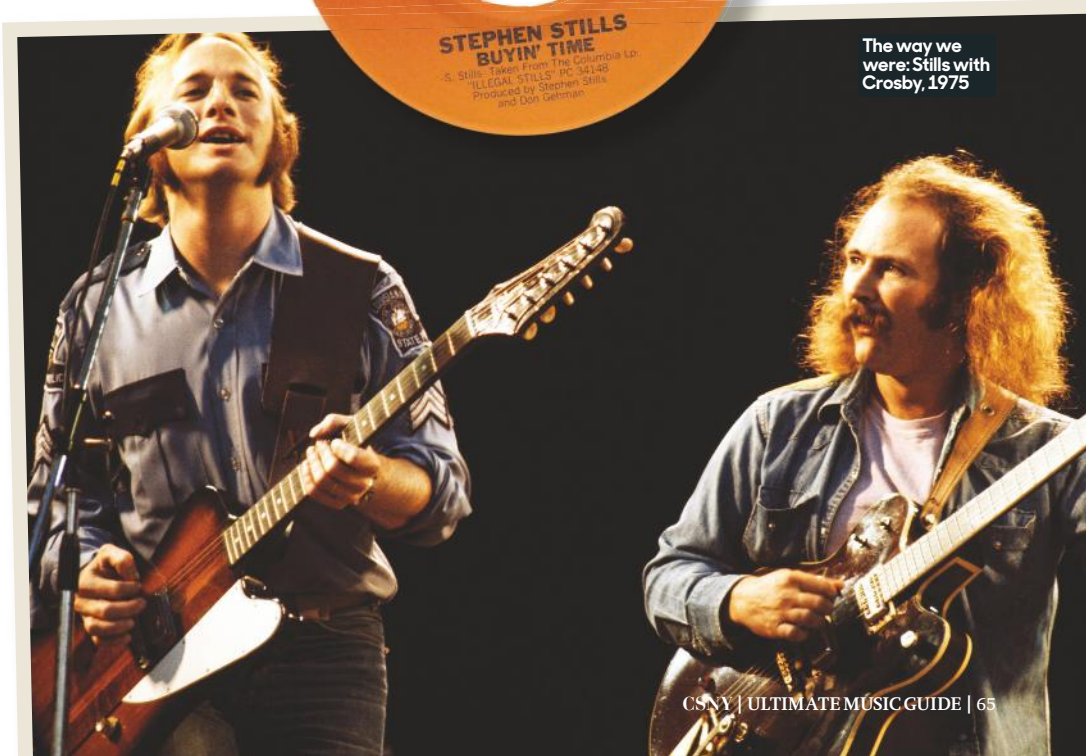
"I just... I wanna play my axe for people and that's it. That's the bottom line, appearing in front of people, doing your job like that, which is what I'm doing on this tour."

Last year Stills moved from Atlantic Records to CBS, a surprising move considering his long relationship with Ahmet Ertegun's company and what he describes as a deep personal friendship with Ertegun.

"With Atlantic it was always, 'When are you going to do another CSNY album?' Columbia has me as a solo act, so there's a little different attitude in the company. They let me record with Neil. They said, 'Fine'."

"You can't deny a great record," he went on, raising criticism of his albums without being prompted. "If the public like a record they'll buy it no matter what the critics say. A critic can cause trouble because if distributors read a review that's bad they won't pick it up. Maybe distributors will order 100,000 instead of 200,000, but what happens is that those are sold in a week and they have to re-order. That happens to me every time." ●





The way we were: Stills with Crosby, 1975

MICHAEL PUTLAND/GETTY IMAGES

CROSBY, STILLS & NASH

CSN

RELEASED JUNE 17, 1977

Reconvened unexpectedly, the core trio set sail for softer waters – with commercially successful results.

BY ERIN OSMON

CROSBY, STILLS & NASH'S second studio album finds the trio in an easygoing posture – rare for a band that was often in conflict. Recorded after the confusing events of the Stills/Young Band's *Long May You Run* session (a convening of the CSNY quartet which fleetingly became a mooted CSNY album, only to end in disarray), *CSN* followed Crosby and Nash's unlikely rapprochement with Stephen Stills.

Equal parts soft rock and pop, with touches of prog and folk, *CSN* marked a transformation for a group that had become figureheads of Los Angeles counterculture. In the years since their debut, their West Coast pastoral sound had become a template for bands like the Eagles to harness, polish and capitalise upon, sporting the faded denim of Laurel Canyon but with commercial ambitions squarely at odds with that scene's hippie ethos. Now with the aid of an impressive supporting cast of soft rock mainstays (including drummers Joe Vitale and Russ Kunkel, keyboard player Craig Doerge and bassist George "Chocolate" Perry), CSN returned the favour, modernising their harmony with the younger generation's AOR shine.

A cynic might say *CSN* is the sound of that counterculture grasping at relevance, embracing yachty laidback reinvention with the aim of selling records. But the fairer assessment observes that as culture shifts, so must its makers. Rather than become stodgy old men clinging to the past, Crosby, Stills and Nash rolled with the times, both in their sound and in their recreational activities, which now included no small amount of cocaine.

CRITICS' VERDICTS

"It's the old strength in numbers ploy as three musical deficients try to muster some dint of the old star dust of Woodstock yesteryear, hoping it will mist over their combined terminal condition."
Nick Kent, NME, 25/06/1977

"Everything is virtually as it was, and there we have the crux of the reservations that must, sadly, swamp this album."
Colin Irwin, MM, 25/06/1977

The album's cover photo, by Joel Bernstein, depicted them living the literal and figurative high life. Bernstein photographed the trio in a series of thoughtful poses, but the band eventually decided they preferred an image of them laughing . Good cheer ultimately proved to be well in order, as *CSN* became the trio's best-selling album without Neil Young, peaking at No 2 on the Billboard pop albums chart and outselling their 1969 debut. Featuring songs written by all three members, it exudes individualism and yet at the same time maintains a collective sense of peace, making for a dynamic and mostly smooth listen.

As ever, it was Graham Nash – the diplomat, the pragmatist, the reliable melodic talent – who was able to come up with the goods on the day, irrespective of the pervading mood in the room. Crosby and Stills' contributions, by contrast, were shaky. After a stellar five years supporting an incredible productivity, Stills was headed towards burnout. His third solo album met a tepid response in 1975, and he had been unceremoniously and humblingly abandoned by Neil Young midway through the *Long May You Run* tour. Crosby's productivity was way down; his recreational use right up.

Nash's five-plus-minute epic "Cathedral" is often considered the centrepiece of *CSN*, and you can see how that opinion might have come about. It relays the experience of an acid trip he took in Winchester Cathedral on a visit to the UK, and is imbued with internal conflict centring on

TRACK MARKS

1. Shadow Captain ★★★★
2. See The Changes ★★★★
3. Carried Away ★★★
4. Fair Game ★★
5. Anything At All ★★★
6. Cathedral ★★★★
7. Dark Star ★★★★
8. Just a Song Before I Go ★★★★
9. Run From Tears ★★★
10. Cold Rain ★★★
11. In My Dreams ★★★★
12. I Give You Give Blind ★★★

Label: Atlantic
Produced by: David Crosby, Graham Nash, Stephen Stills, Howard Albert, Rob Albert
Recorded at: Criteria Studios, Miami
Personnel includes: Graham Nash, David Crosby, Stephen Stills, Russ Kunkel, Joe Vitale, Craig Doerge, Jimmy Haslip, Ray Barretto, Tim Drummond, Gerald Johnson, Mike Finnigan, Mike Lewis
Highest chart position: UK 23; US 2

religion, fear and death. It's a winding composition that mirrors Nash's emotional journey, alternately drifting and frenetic, with abrupt tempo changes, harrowing strings and layered voices representing an acute paranoia. Certainly the song is impressive, but it's also a little showy when compared with the valuable restraint and palpable ease heard throughout another of Nash's contributions to the record.

"Just A Song Before I Go" was purportedly written in 20 minutes to win a $500 bet, while Nash waited out a flash of rain in Maui. It's the album's highest charting single, and the most compelling sonic encapsulation of time and place from *CSN*. Its groove and gentle guitar solo read as the group's answer to the Eagles' "One of These Nights", more mellow and folk infused, less concerned with dancing than with sailing on a gentle breeze. "*Just a song before I go/A lesson to be learned/Travelling twice the speed of sound/It's easy to get burned,*" Nash writes in conclusion, offering a low-key response to another personal epiphany.

How Stills' "Fair Game" became the second charting single from *CSN* is an unsolved and disturbing mystery. Stills had displayed a fascination with Latin rhythms since his days in Buffalo Springfield, but on "Fair Game" it translates as an unremarkable cruise-ship soundtrack rather than something aiming at authenticity or respect. Combined with hamfisted lyrics which reek of an enduring toxic masculinity, the song is not only a dud, it's regrettable. "*The ones you never notice are the ones you have to watch/She's pleasant and she's friendly while she's looking at your crotch,*" Stills sings without a hint of embarrassment. Like his hit "Love the One You're With", "Fair Game" is a song that screams for revision if not outright dismissal.

> It exudes individualism yet maintains a collective sense of peace

Stills' "See The Changes" and "Dark Star" are far more respectable contributions to the album. The former is a tender reflection on the passage of time, a theme that preoccupies the album writ large, centred on acoustic guitar and the group's signature three-part vocal harmony. The latter is a reflection on a broken relationship, with the rhythm section paying more subtle and respectful deference to Latin music.

The Crosby-penned tunes on *CSN*, by comparison, are less memorable, but not entirely tepid. They don't elicit the same alternate success and controversy as Stills' work, or the palpable spirit of experimentation of Nash's songs. Crosby's strongest leadership on *CSN* appears on album opener "Shadow Captain", a softly textured and jazz-flecked composition by keyboardist Craig Doerge. Crosby's lyrics here present an apt thesis, concerned with mortality and passing time. "*Who guides this ship/Dreaming through the seas/Turning and searching/Whichever way you please,*" he wonders. With *CSN*, the three principles all but let go of expectations, and sailed toward an unexpected hit. ●

CROSBY, STILLS AND NASH

Daylight Again

RELEASED JUNE 21, 1982

Commercial concerns require Stills and Nash to send mayday calls to David Crosby. Reunited in name, the trio float adrift from the '80s.

BY NICK HASTED

THE new decade began by piling indignities on Laurel Canyon's frazzled princes. A 1980 Stephen Stills album was summarily rejected by his label, and Nash's *Earth & Sky* not only flopped badly, but was ushered to the cut-out bins by a savage review from the formerly loyal *Rolling Stone*. Constructing an inane conversation from choice Nash lyrics, its writer concluded: "Even his friends won't tell him." Crosby had meanwhile compensated for his old partners' absence with multi-track self-harmonies, on a solo album Capitol deemed "unfinished". Crosby railed Canute-like against the dimly perceived tides of changing pop taste, deriding "dumb" new wave, after the label unfavourably compared him to Elvis Costello and Devo, then dropped him. Woodstock associations seemed to have suddenly turned toxic, as CSN's constituent parts neared middle age.

Crosby and Stills both responded to these changes by spending more time on their yachts. Nash meanwhile returned to the comforts of his wife Susan and two young children. The impetus for a response to chastening times came in similarly relaxed circumstances in the summer of 1980, when Nash asked Stills to help him support a mayoral candidate in the Hawaiian town he sometimes called home. Stills' plans to holiday nearby led to acoustic benefit concerts, then a joint European tour which suggested Stills-Nash could be a new path forward.

Sessions began that autumn in Los Angeles and the Hawaii island of Oahu. Stills' '80s-appropriate new leaf in the wake of his often monstrous '70s saw him rise early for tennis and an ocean swim. He also relinquished musical control to Nash as their new bond strengthened, while former Eagle Timothy B Schmit and Art Garfunkel tried to fill the Crosby-shaped harmony hole.

CRITICS' VERDICTS

"Much of *Daylight Again* drips with lazy metaphor and bad-faith emoting – "Into the Darkness", Nash's admonishing of Crosby, being the worst offender – but Stills' 'Southern Cross' soars gloriously and so, against all odds, does Crosby's 'Delta'."
Barney Hoskyns, Uncut, 2006

Simply finding a fresh permutation of C, S or N was, though, no longer enough. Atlantic declined to back a Stills-Nash album, even after the pair spent $400,000 making one, a further bleak humiliation. "The combination of us missing David's voice... and us having pressure from the record company to make it CSN, made us see that David had to be involved," Nash sheepishly confessed.

Their missing element was by now notoriously unstable, freebasing cocaine as his talent self-immolated. "I had stopped writing," Crosby later admitted. At the time, he railed against his critics: "I was stoned for every bit of music I've ever played... If they can match the music, let them criticise it."

Still, CSN's own King Lear had little career choice but to accept this latest reunion, so facilitating what was incredibly only their third studio album as a trio, *Daylight Again*. Their last appearance together, for the 1980 anti-nuclear benefit Survival Sunday, had been a rough-hewn, earnestly political affair, in which Nash had said New York could burn for all he cared so long as his beloved ocean was saved, and the crowd roar rose as Crosby and then Stills appeared. Now, the missing voices were shoehorned onto the multi-tracks of existing Crosby and Stills-Nash songs, no meaningful meeting even contemplated as the band bowed to the commercial realities of their most famous formation.

Nash's "Wasted On the Way" exceeded chart targets when it sped into the US Top 10. It also went some way to artistically justifying the project, as chiming acoustic guitars introduced an irresistible, Hollies-worthy mid-'60s pop tune reflecting contentedly on life as a mature rock star. If listing happy friends who had similarly "*got what they deserved*" risked Lotusland smugness, gorgeous close harmonies and buoyant fiddle reinforced the optimistic mood. An elegy for time wasted – in

TRACK MARKS

1. Turn Your Back On Love ★★★
2. Wasted On The Way ★★★
3. Southern Cross ★★★
4. Into The Darkness ★★★
5. Delta ★★★★
6. Since I Met You ★★
7. Too Much Love To Hide ★★
8. Song For Susan ★★★
9. You Are Alive ★★
10. Might As Well Have A Good Time ★★★★
11. Daylight Again/Find The Cost Of Freedom ★★★

Label: Atlantic
Produced by: Crosby, Stills and Nash
Recorded at: Rudy Records, LA; Devonshire Sound Studios, LA; Sea-West Studios, Seattle; Oahu, Hawaii
Personnel: David Crosby (vocals, keyboards), Stephen Stills (vcl, guitars, banjo, percussion), Graham Nash (vocals, rhythm gtr, harmonica, piano, organ), Timothy B Schmit (acoustic gtr, bass), Art Garfunkel (vcl), Joel Bernstein (ac gtr), Michael Stergis, Danny Kortchmar, Gerry Tolman, Dean Parks (elec gtr), Mike Finnigan (keys, bk vcl), Craig Doerge, Richard T Bear, James Newton Howard (keys), Jay Ferguson (organ), George Perry, Bob Glaub, Leland Skar (bass), Joe Vitale, Russ Kunkel, Jeff Porcaro (drums), Joe Lala (perc), Wayne Goodwin (fiddle, cello arr), Roberleigh Barnhart, Miguel Martinez (cello)
Highest chart position: UK – ; US 8

ways which hardly needed specifying to devotees of CSN's substance-soaked soap opera – the song had an attractively wistful edge for the band's audience, themselves getting older. "Song for Susan" similarly turned Nash's marital contentment into a '60s-style pop confection. Elsewhere, Stills offered his own post-divorce bromides in "Since I Met You" and "You Are Alive", though both suffered from session-funk slickness.

NASH meanwhile used "Into The Darkness" to hector the faltering comrade who appeared to have traded his muse for a crack-pipe. The album's default funk shuffle became Black Sabbath-doomy as he imagined hellish flames licking Crosby, and more intimate nightmare scenes: "*You're screaming too loud, no-one can hear you.*" Insufferably preachy as some saw it, given their mutually destructive pasts, Nash's warning of his friend's likely fate was brutally direct: "*I see your face it is ghostly pale/Into the sunset we are watching you sail.*" The band at least offered a hand, though Crosby wasn't yet ready to take it: "*We have been trying, trying to find you/There's no use denying our love is behind you.*"

Ironically, Crosby's sole writing credit, "Delta", was *Daylight Again*'s most limpidly beautiful song. Crosby's memory of writing it "stoned halfway out of my mind on my boat", before completing it with Jackson Browne's firm encouragement on Warren Zevon's piano, suggested it was a result of, rather than respite from, his debauch. But, as the phoned-in unity of Nash and Stills harmonies bolstered its blissful AOR piano balladry, Crosby was at his vocally yearning best.

> The album couldn't hide the hollowness of this unwanted reunion

His version of Judy Henske and Craig Doerge's "Might As Well Have A Good Time" was a still more charming lifestyle apologia, its rueful vocal and rolling New Orleans piano suggesting Randy Newman. "Delta" was also a song of yacht-bound escape, as was Stills' "Southern Cross", a favoured CSN trope again showing how high-end hippie dreams of freedom had become. Though the decade of Duran Duran would be more sympathetic to such nautical excess, CSN still sounded adrift of changing times.

Daylight Again was concluded by its title track, a Stills Civil War reverie conjoined with "Ohio" B-side and CSNY showstopper "Find the Cost of Freedom" in an attempt to firmly reassert the trio's roots. But Crosby's dysfunction was both *Daylight Again*'s most arresting subject and fatal flaw. The album couldn't hide the hollowness of this unwanted reunion, or its most charismatic principal's troubling decline. ●

CROSBY, STILLS & NASH

Crosby, Stills and Nash solo in the 1980s

RELEASED 1980–1989

Throwbacks and comebacks, politics and confessionals as CSN individually tackle the synthetic decade.

BY TERRY STAUNTON

ALTHOUGH the famous friends with whom he'd shared top billing during the previous decade were largely absent, Graham Nash entered the 1980s still hankering for the group dynamic of old. Hence the core band for *Earth & Sky*, his first solo outing in seven years, comprised members of the troupe that had earlier backed him with David Crosby and Stephen Stills.

Dubbed The Mighty Jitters, the collective of guitarists David Lindley and Danny Kortchmar, bassist Tim Drummond, keyboard player Craig Doerge and drummer Russ Kunkel ensured the album had at least tentative links to what had gone before, and for Nash it was the third time in as many years that he'd tried to get a project off the ground. Sessions for a CSN release in 1978 came to nothing, while attempts to make a record in tandem with Crosby the following year were thwarted by the latter's continuing drug dependence.

Nash did manage to salvage some of the songs earmarked for the two-hander for *Earth & Sky*, as evidenced by Crosby's backing vocal credit on two of the 10 tracks, while Stills contributes rhythm guitar to another. "Those projects crumbled because of lack of material, lack of energy, lack of respect, whatever, so I decided to just keep going," he told US music magazine *BAM*.

"I got off on it because I had nobody to answer to except myself. Normally, I never have anyway, but when you're making an album with David and Stephen one is answerable to the collective cause. It was interesting to have total control, with no-one looking."

He's at his strongest on the articulate balladry of "Love Has Come" and "Magical Child", but makes a good fist of the more uptempo material, the title track in particular bolstered by guest Joe Walsh's fiery lead guitar.

Stills, meanwhile, kept his solo powder dry until 1984's *Right By You*, but a lack of cohesion and an over-reliance on synthesised keyboards meant it was mostly met with shrugs from those who bothered to seek it out. A reworking of Neil Young's "Only Love Can Break Your Heart" with an additional meandering verse (written by Stills) serves only to send listeners racing back to the original.

More inspired is the bluegrass-tinged "No Hiding Place", first performed by country pioneers The Carter Family in 1934, upon which Bernie Leadon and Chris Hillman make their presence felt, while the slow blues of the title track is distinguished by some deft guitar work by Jimmy Page, one of three numbers to which he contributes. Elsewhere, the Latin motifs of "50/50" and "No Problem" seem lazy and pedestrian, but "Can't Let Go" is as sturdy as any other ballads in his catalogue.

A similar leaning towards clinical '80s production techniques hamstrung Nash's next album, *Innocent Eyes*, the innate warmth of his voice often left outside to catch a chill. The experimental nature of the record as a whole suggests a lack of a solid modus operandi, as if its maker is fashioning a series of disjointed audition pieces before settling on a clear plan of action – the clumsy reggae of "Chippin' Away" is immediately followed by a second ode to the fall of the Berlin Wall, the leaden synth rock of "Over The Wall".

When the instrumentation is kept relatively in check, however, Nash retains an affecting, intimate quality, best heard on the no-nonsense romance of "Sad Eyes" and the confessional, cautionary "Glass And Steel", the latter read by some fans as a gesture of support for his troubled colleague Crosby.

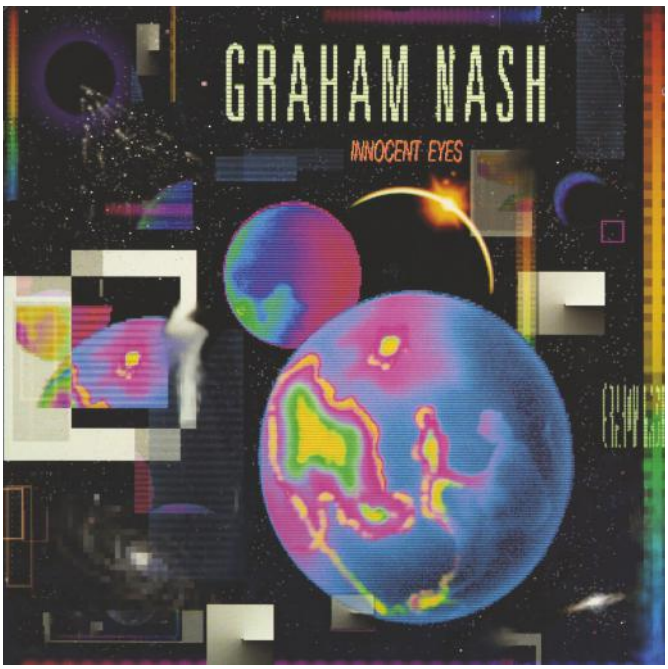
CROZ himself returned to recording at the close of the decade, older and wiser after a turbulent few years during which his name mostly appeared in print owing to brushes with the law. In 1982 he was jailed for nine months on charges of possessing both cocaine and heroin, and he was in trouble again in 1985 for drunk driving, leaving the scene of a road accident and possession of a concealed weapon and drug paraphernalia.

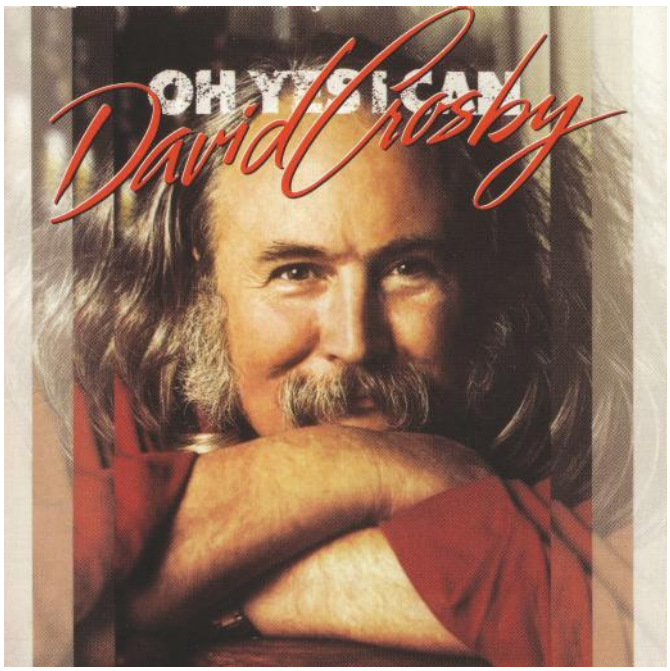
In some ways, *Oh Yes I Can* was a cathartic exercise, with Crosby intermittently acknowledging his demons while also

CRITICS' VERDICTS

OH YES I CAN

"DC's ideas about rock'n'roll are both clumsy and outdated; he is forever tripping himself up when he should be standing tall. 'Drive My Car', for example, is a typically antiquated Californian cruiser which runs out of gas before we even reach the chorus." **Edwin Pouncey, NME, 18/02/1989**





gingerly testing the waters of a music industry in which he had been little more than a peripheral figure for so long. The album came a full 18 years after his only previous solo work, and arguably his distance from the shifts and trends that Stills and Nash had tried to embrace with limited success gave him a blanker canvas on which to paint.

The title itself is a witty riposte to his last outing, 1971's *If Only I Could Remember My Name*, and no amount of laboured metaphor disguises the fact that "Monkey And The Underdog" is the sound of a man chronicling the state of his mind at its lowest ebb. Yet the flip side to facing uncomfortable truths is when Crosby becomes nostalgic for better days, when the instrumentation and arrangements hark back to earlier, simpler times.

"Tracks In The Dust" echoes with Laurel Canyon memories ("*My friend said you've been watching TV too much/All that hippie hopefulness is just a crutch*"), driven by cowboy choir harmonies from, among others, Jackson Browne and James Taylor, and there's an equally evocative and ethereal vibe to "In The Wide Ruin". Much of the credit has to go to erstwhile Mighty Jitter and co-writer on four tracks Craig Doerge, whose unfussy production keeps the focus on Crosby's emotive voice, be it the tender poetry of "Melody" or the wordless jazz scat of "Flying Man" with its shades of Steely Dan.

For Crosby, reuniting with Stills, Nash and Young for the previous year's *American Dream* gave him the confidence to embark on a solo venture so swiftly, telling *The Guardian* that Nash in particular played a vital role.

"He tried everything to stop my addiction, and I know I caused him a lot of pain. The only good thing I can say about it is that I'm giving him a great deal of pleasure now, because he gets to watch me come back, and we're having a great time." ●

TRACK MARKS

GRAHAM NASH
Earth & Sky
EMI, 1980
★★★★
Produced by: Graham Nash and Stanley Johnston
Recorded at: Rudy Records, LA
Highest chart position: US 117/UK –

STEPHEN STILLS
Right By You
ATLANTIC, 1984
★★★
Produced by: Stephen Stills, Ron Albert, Howard Albert, Steve Alaimo
Recorded at: information not available
Highest chart position: US 75; UK –

GRAHAM NASH
Innocent Eyes
ATLANTIC, 1986 ★★★
Produced by: Graham Nash, Stanley Johnston, Craig Doerge
Recorded at: Devonshire Studios, LA; Longview Farms, Worcester; Rudy Records, LA; Sea-West Studios, Oahu; Smoke Tree Studios, LA, CA
Highest chart position: US 136; UK –

DAVID CROSBY
Oh Yes I Can
A&M, 1989
★★★★
Produced by: David Crosby, Stanley Johnston, Craig Doerge
Recorded at: Devonshire Sound, LA; A&M Studios, LA; Criteria, Miami; Cherokee Studios, LA
Highest chart position: US 104; UK –

CROSBY, STILLS, NASH & YOUNG

American Dream

RELEASED NOVEMBER 1, 1988

David Crosby cleans up his act, so Neil Young keeps a promise he had made to reform the quartet. Thus begins (and effectively ends) the first CSNY album for 18 years. BY ROB HUGHES

IN 1983, concerned for his lapsed bandmate, Neil Young vowed to revive CSNY if David Crosby could kick his drugs habit and straighten himself out. This was no mean task for Crosby, whose debilitating addiction to freebase cocaine, allied to various weapons charges, would land him in a Texan jail in the early part of 1986. Finally clean, he emerged five months later, "surprised to be alive".

Young kept his word. CSNY duly reformed for his Bridge School Benefit later that year, followed by a couple of well-received acoustic gigs in aid of Greenpeace. The goodwill extended to the studio, with Young inviting Crosby and the others up to his ranch in San Mateo County to record *American Dream*, a belated follow-up to 1970's *Déjà Vu*.

"There we were, up at Neil's ranch, in a beautiful setting, having a great time," recalls Graham Nash today. "It was good. Any time the four of us get together and we're all in a cool mood, it's really a great feeling. I have very positive feelings about *American Dream*."

For all the convivial vibes, however, CSNY were in no real shape to make a decent fist of it, despite Young's assertion to *Rolling Stone* that "there's a lot more depth and rawness and a lot more funk and soul in this band than has ever been heard on record". Crosby was still in a fragile state of recuperation, apparently spending most of the time lying on a couch by the studio console, while Stills was undergoing his own problems with cocaine, a situation that had been hobbling his creative faculties for some years.

Nash had hardly been prolific during the '80s, issuing a pair of pedestrian solo LPs in between getting back together with his old mates in The Hollies. Young, meanwhile, had been steadily plotting a perverse course through the decade with a divergent series of low-selling albums that seemed to prize experimentalism over any kind of commercial concern. The upshot was that *American Dream* was desperately short of memorable songs.

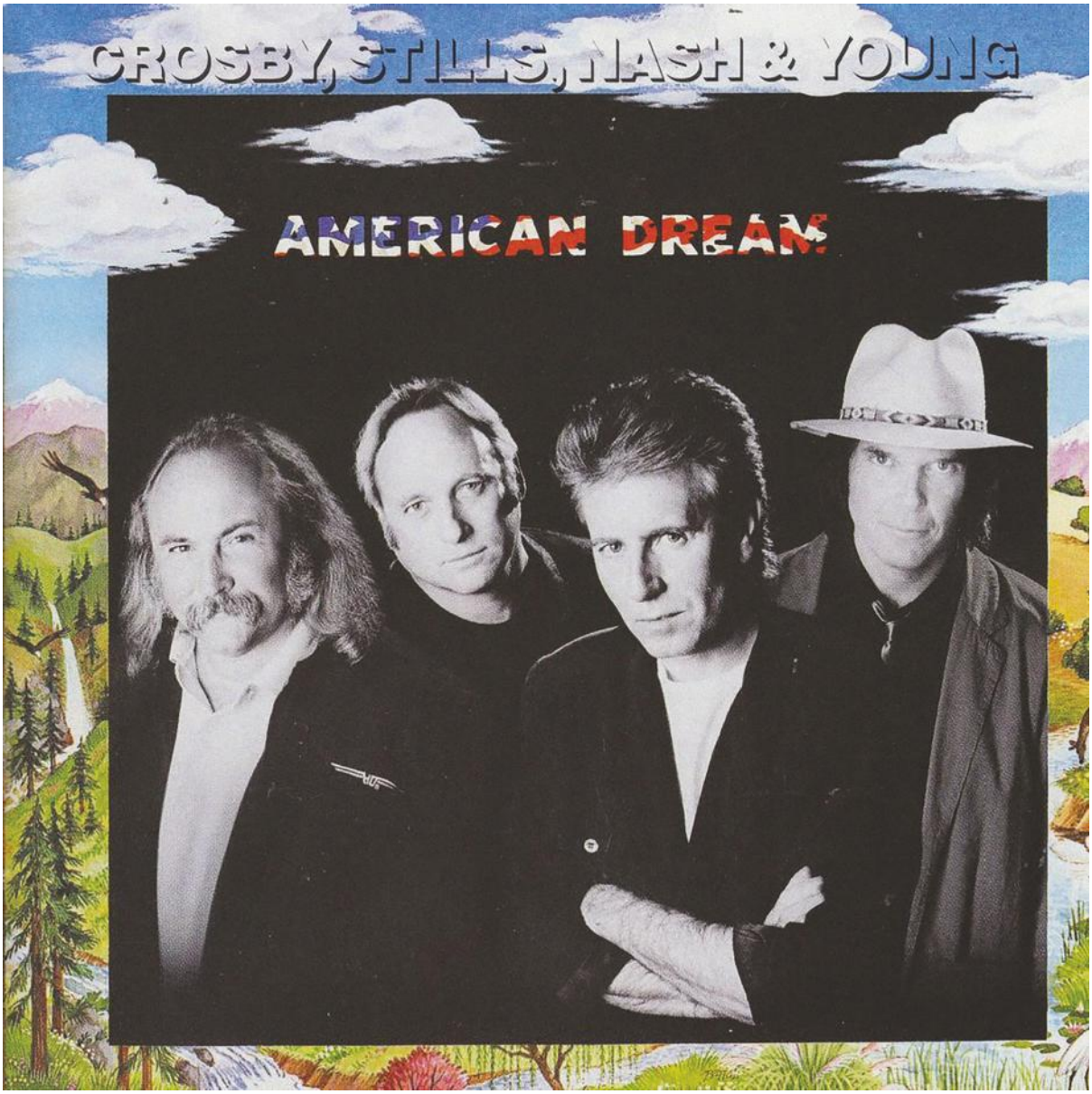
There were certainly enough of them – 14, in fact. But by neglecting quality in favour of width, CSNY only made the listening experience more interminable. Nor was the album helped by the kind of late-'80s production that cushioned most of it in comfy synths and processed drum sounds. If the CSNY of *Déjà Vu* had represented a brilliant flare of youthful vitality, the quartet who made *American Dream* appeared to have been dulled by the encroachment of middle age on their artistic capabilities.

The tragedy was that *American Dream* housed some laudable ideas and a certain amount of well-intentioned rhetoric. Young's title track, for instance, can be taken as a damning commentary on corruptive American politics, issued in the wake of the Iran-Contra scandal and the fall from grace of Democratic presidential candidate Gary Hart: "*Then they caught you with the girl next door/People's money piled on the floor/Accusations that you try to deny/Revelations and rumours begin to fly.*"

Director Julien Temple's satirical video rammed home the point in comedic style. Young enjoyed a dual role as a seedy reporter and a mad-haired rocker, Nash played the fallen politico, Crosby was the wheelchair-bound sleazebag in the big mansion and Stills took on the role of the washed-up military guy with a pistol in the drawer. The only problem was that the finger-snapping song was such a dud. It's jaunty to the point of tediousness, almost entirely (and inexplicably) based around a Stills synth riff designed to sound like a piping Andean flute.

CRITICS' VERDICTS

"*American Dream* turns out to be much more than a chummy reunion; it is a record with a lot on its mind and one that insn't afraid to express its feelings. Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young show their heart, soul and muscle with a statement that is their own sign of the times. Dinosaur Sr are as tough as Dinosaur Jr any time." **Edwin Pouncey, NME, 03/12/1988**



TRACK MARKS

1. American Dream ★★
2. Got It Made ★★
3. Name Of Love ★★
4. Don't Say Goodbye ★★
5. This Old House ★★
6. Nighttime For The Generals ★★★
7. Shadowland ★★★
8. Drivin' Thunder ★
9. Clear Blue Skies ★★
10. That Girl ★★
11. Compass ★★★
12. Soldiers Of Peace ★★
13. Feel Your Love ★★★
14. Night Song ★★

Label: Atlantic
Produced by: CSNY and Niko Bolas
Recorded at: Redwood Digital, Woodside, California
Personnel: David Crosby (vocals, acoustic guitar), Stephen Stills (vocals, guitar, synthesiser, percussion), Graham Nash (vocals, piano, guitar, keyboards), Neil Young (vocals, guitar, piano, harmonica, percussion), Joe Vitale (drums, keyboards, synth, percussion, vibraphone), Bob Glaub (bass), Joe Lala (percussion), Mike Finnigan (organ), The Bluenotes (horns) and "The Volume Dealers Choir" (backing vocals)
Highest Chart Position: UK – ; US 16

Sadly, it's Stills who comes out of *American Dream* worst (though, admittedly, it's a close call). It's hard to find merit in any of his four contributions – three of them co-written with Young, it has to be said. When he's not doling out sappy ballads like "Got It Made" and the execrable "That Girl", he unpacks his guitar for a brace of mid-paced rockers. He hits a particular low on "Drivin' Thunder", undoing the promising work of its bluesy intro by settling into some bar-room bombast that even Huey Lewis & The News might have rejected as being a bit hokey. "*People put me down, say that I'm a fool,*" sings Stills with a minimum of conviction, "*But I got news for them/I ain't never going back to driving school.*" And no, it doesn't get better from there.

FOR all their worthy subject matter, Nash's songs – "Soldiers Of Peace", eco ballad "Clear Blue Skies" and the Vietnam-referencing "Shadowland" – lack any real bite. His other effort, "Don't Say Goodbye", a piano-led love letter to his then-wife Susan, is sentimental mulch.

Young's best offering is the unplugged "Feel Your Love", replete with soft harmonies, in which he seems genuinely vulnerable. It's also an interesting pre-echo of *Harvest Moon*, still four years away. But it's Crosby who comes out of *American Dream* with the least damage to his reputation. The pointed "Nighttime For The Generals", addressing covert political skulduggery against a backdrop of that year's presidential election (won by ex-CIA chief George Bush Snr), finds Crosby in strident voice as the ripping guitars of Stills and Young tear into gear.

> For all the convivial vibes, CSNY were in no shape to make a decent fist of it

Written during his incarceration, "Compass" doesn't possess the most striking Crosby melody, but its lyrics acknowledge both his stupidity and resilience in the face of appalling self-destruction: "*I have wasted 10 years in a blindfold /Tenfold more than I've invested now in sight.../But like a compass seeking north/There lives in me a still, sure, spirit part.*" It's one of the few moments on *American Dream* where someone sounds like they actually mean it.

Despite everything, not least a batch of less than flattering reviews, the allure of a reunited CSNY was enough to push sales of the album past the platinum mark in the States, where it dipped inside the Billboard Top 20. Worldwide figures fell just shy of the two million mark. Its creators, however, all but disowned it shortly afterwards, refusing to tour *American Dream* at all.

Young distanced himself quickly, moving on to complete *Freedom*, his best album in a decade. Reflecting on *American Dream* a year later, he simply told the *Village Voice*: "It could've been great. I did it to keep a promise." ●

CROSBY, STILLS & NASH

Live It Up

RELEASED JUNE 26,1990

The Berlin Wall tumbles – and CSN are ready with a song. Elsewhere, fleeting moments of genius temper a set searching for inspiration in all the wrong places. BY PETER WATTS

EVEN in their weakest moments, Crosby, Stills & Nash could deliver moments of sublimity. One of the most unexpected comes four tracks into *Live It Up*, an album whose scant promise seemed to be advertised by the appalling cover art. But then "Haven't We Lost Enough?" shimmers into hearing. This rich acoustic blues, written and performed essentially as a solo piece by Steve Stills, would stand out on any CSNY album. *Live It Up* might be a tough sell, but "Haven't We Lost Enough?" makes it worth the price of admission.

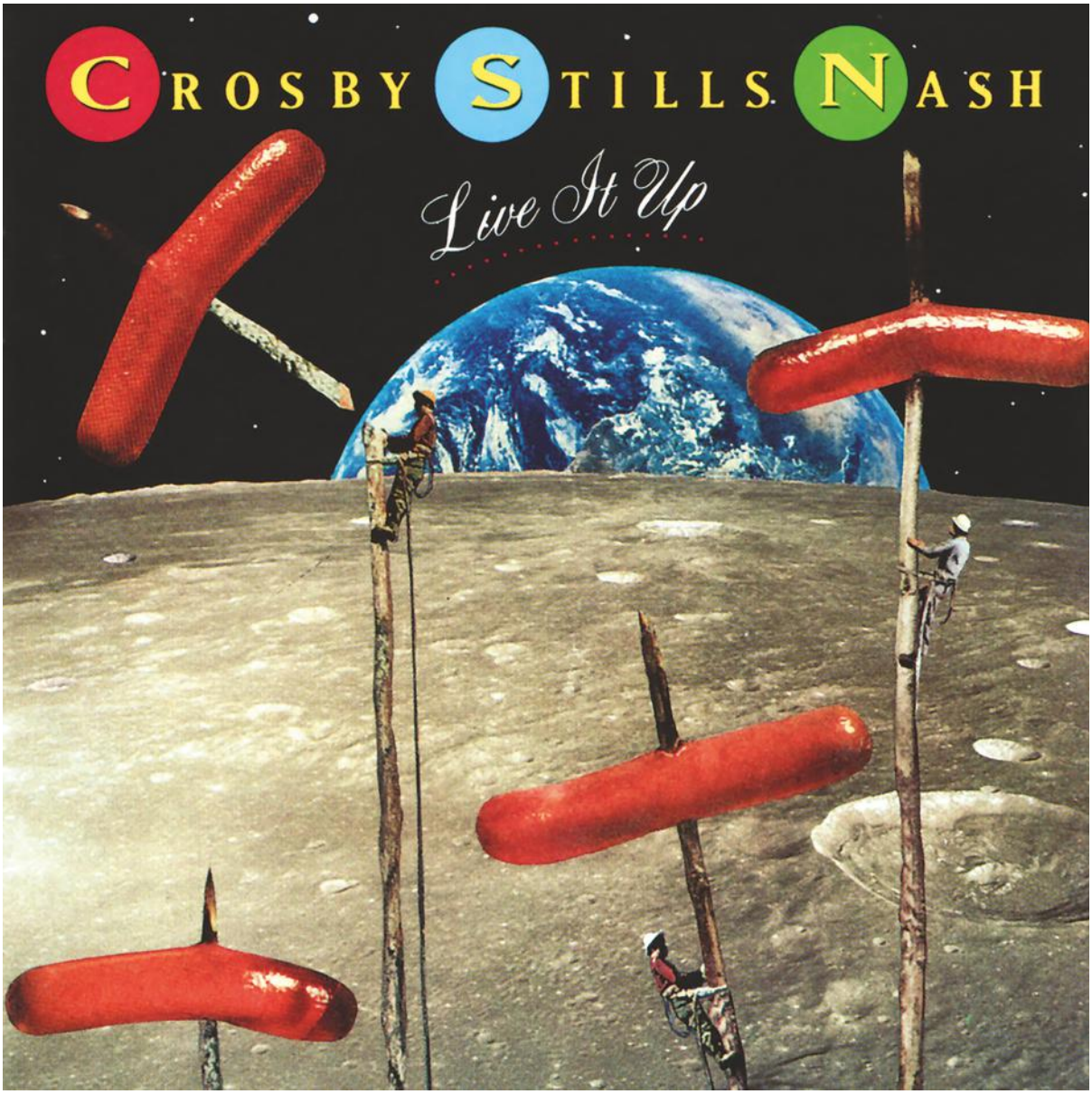
The track marks the point at which the album picks up, suggesting that *Live It Up*'s meagre reputation as the band's lowest selling studio release might be a problem of sequencing as much as anything else. We're lucky even to have it: Stills wasn't originally intended to be on the record. *Live It Up* had started out as a Crosby-Nash LP, Stills and Young having both taken off on solo tours following the recording of *American Dream*. It usually took something momentous to draw the three back into the studio together and in this instance the trigger was one of the most dramatic moments of the decade: the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Shortly after the wall came down in November 1989, Crosby, Stills and Nash seized the moment and convened at the Brandenburg Gate to perform a 20-minute set in front of 1,000 Berliners. This wasn't entirely charitable. The trio played "Long Time Gone" and "Teach The Children", but they also sang Nash's 1986 song "Chippin' Away", which had been written about the wall but which the trio promptly re-recorded with James Taylor and issued as a cheery single. Nonetheless, that post-Communist spirit of hope and unity was enough to inspire the trio to reunite for an official CSN album. Atlantic were happy – as with *Daylight Again*, the hope was that a CSN record would sell better than a Crosby-Nash affair, improving the quality and raising the appeal.

As ever things weren't quite as they appeared. Tear your eyes away from the terrible cover and look at the credits, where the warning signs flash in the form of numerous studios and a multitude of sidemen. *Live It Up* also had three songs that weren't even written by Crosby, Stills or Nash, while the core trio of Crosby, Stills and Nash only harmonise on a single track. Crosby's absence is the most noticeable: he only appears on four tracks. To compensate, guest artists were recruited – Roger McGuinn on "If Anybody Had A Heart", Bruce Hornsby on "(Got To Keep) Open", Pete Frampton on "Straight Line".

Stills is all over the album and wrote the best songs, but Nash was the dominant spirit, an executive director providing shape and direction. The big challenge was trying to marry the front-porch sound of *Crosby, Stills & Nash* with modern production techniques. Nash settled on a similar approach to the one he'd taken on his own *Innocent Eyes*. The opening track sets the mood. This attempt at upbeat '80s power pop in the MTV-friendly Genesis style features a lead vocal by Nash but was written by Joe Vitale, who then slathered it in heavy-handed synth. It feels horribly generic, although close listeners will be rewarded by Stills' fine guitar solo. Some songs escape this treatment, but the overarching sound makes it hard to distinguish treats from trash.

Let's start with the latter. Skip right past "Tomboy", which is the first track to feature all three members – Crosby and Nash on guitar, Stills on guitar and lead vocals – but stands out only for the painfully middle-aged lyric ("*Tomboy, always with the wrong boy/You need a strong boy*"). You can also probably avoid "If Anybody Had a Heart", which tones down the production style enough for Nash's vocal to cut



TRACK MARKS

1. Live It Up ★★
2. If Anybody Had A Heart ★★
3. Tomboy ★
4. Haven't We Lost Enough? ★★★★★
5. Yours And Mine ★★★
6. (Got To Keep) Open ★★★
7. Straight Line ★★
8. House Of Broken Dreams ★★★★
9. Arrows ★★★
10. After The Dolphin ★★★

Label Atlantic
Produced by: David Crosby, Stephen Stills, Graham Nash, Joe Vitale, Stanley Johnston
Recorded at: The Record Plant, LA; Home Brew Studio, Ohio; Devonshire Studios, LA; Capitol Records, LA
Personnel: David Crosby (vocals, guitar), Stephen Stills (vocals, guitar, keyboards, bass), Graham Nash (vocals, guitar), Joe Vitale (drums, synth, organ, percussion), Roger McGuinn (guitar), Peter Frampton (guitar), Bruce Hornsby (piano, accordion), Craig Doerge (keyboards), Bob Glaub (bass), Leland Sklar (bass), John David Souther (vocals), The Williams Family (vocals), Branford Marsalis (soprano sax), Mike Landau (guitar), Tony Beard (percussion, guitar), Mike Fisher, Michito Sanchez and Vince Charles (percussion)
Highest chart position: UK – ; US 57

through. Stills again provides a decent guitar solo, this time accompanied by Roger McGuinn. It's a weird old song, written by Danny Kortchmar and JD Souther and originally recorded by John Waite for the none-more-'80s Rob Lowe/Demi Moore romcom *About Last Night*. That something so mediocre ended up being covered by Crosby, Stills & Nash shows how badly Nash was struggling for first-rate material. That three such poor songs were chosen to lead off the album is not as forgivable.

Less bad but still pretty pointless is "Straight Line", written by Tony Beard, sung perfunctorily by Nash and featuring forgettable guitar from Pete Frampton. "(Got To Keep) Open" is better. A Nash/Stills co-write that had been around for a while, it has a mild reggae vibe, piano by Bruce Hornsby and lead vocals from Stills. While Stills also offers the album's shining moment in "Haven't We Lost Enough?", Crosby's two contributions aren't bad. "Yours And Mine" is an anti-war ballad that goes on too long but the production isn't too burdensome, even if the presence of Branford Marsalis on sax adds a certain period texture. Marsalis is also on Crosby's "Arrows", a slight but decent love song that is one of the few tracks to make a virtue of the contemporary production, the general slickness working nicely with Crosby's voice – it's just a shame he takes lead so rarely.

> Stills offers the album's shining moment in "Haven't We Lost Enough?"

NONE of Crosby's songs have any contributions from the other two, just as Stills is the only member of CSN on "Haven't We Lost Enough?" and "(Got To Keep) Open". Similarly, the fine "House Of Broken Dreams" only features Nash, who plays nice folky guitar on a lilting song with an enigmatic and elusive feel. Much of the album has such a strident tone to compensate for the weakness of the material, so "House Of Broken Dreams" stands out for its subtlety. Nash also wrote (with Craig Doerge) the album closer, "After The Dolphin". This is an attempt at a big finale, a swing-and-a-miss but one that can't be faulted for good intention. It's also the only track to feature all three of Crosby, Stills and Nash, seemingly round the same mic, in the same room, in the same studio, on the same vibe.

"After The Dolphin" continues the anti-war theme of "Yours And Mine" – the Dolphin of the title is a pub in Bloomsbury that was hit by a bomb dropped by Zeppelin in 1915, one of the first examples of civilians targeted by aerial bombardment. The song is bookended by radio broadcasts, one announcing the attack on the Dolphin and the other the destruction of Hiroshima. "*When you kill from a distance, is anyone to blame?*" asks Nash. It's serious, profound and epic – precisely what you wouldn't expect from an album with a cover of four giant hot dogs on the moon. ●

CROSBY, STILLS & NASH

After The Storm

RELEASED AUGUST 16, 1994

Unlikely documenters of life on the street, CSN rediscover a countercultural relevance far removed from Woodstock.

BY NICK HASTED

BEING certified embodiments of the Woodstock Nation had its downsides for CSN. One was being reluctantly persuaded to play Woodstock '94, on the summer weekend before their latest album's release. Songs from *After The Storm* featured prominently, and Nash as usual was keen to ascribe contemporary significance to the performance, as they played "Military Madness" in the wake of the Gulf War, and songs representing one of the new LP's less likely themes.

"A lot of this new record of ours," Nash earnestly explained to the second vast horde they'd seen in Upstate New York, "is based upon experiences on the street"; "life on the street", he elaborated upon introducing Crosby's "Street To Lean On", "as it really is".

Elsewhere over the weekend of August 12–14, 1994, alternative hip-hop act The Goats took their audience on a phantasmagoric ghost-train ride through American urban and racial ills, and Jackyl's Jessie James Dupree set fire to his stool and then chainsawed it, in between blazing a joint at smoke-blinded TV cameras. Before being wrestled from the stage, he even fired a rifle.

"Old unreconstructed hippie that I am," Crosby had told the *Los Angeles Times*, "I'm loudly predicting that at this carefully managed 250,000-people event, 2.8 million people will show up... It'd be nice to think that there are still some things that aren't totally manageable." Ticket sales of 165,000 duly morphed into a fence-climbing 550,000 crowd. And though the big-shorts-wearing, masculine hordes showed respectful enthusiasm as CSN closed with "Woodstock", they and their fellow veterans and refuseniks of Woodstock '69 – Dylan, Santana and the rest – finally had little relevance next to mud-daubed Nine Inch Nails' industrial grind, or the escalating mud battles with which post-grunge jocks anointed their America in the year of Kurt Cobain's death.

"There's still a few things that the old guys can teach you," John Sebastian had insisted on introducing CSN, but such boomer hubris found little purchase. How then, the trio might have wondered as they left the stage, children hanging from broad middle-aged hips, could a new CSN album wrestle with these times?

Disappointed by their recent releases, especially the inappropriately titled *Live It Up*, the group had brought in an outside producer, Glyn Johns, who was keen to discourage the chasing of contemporary sounds. "I felt now would be a great time to have a record that related a little more to what they used to be," he told the *Los Angeles Times*, as his charges cracked OJ Simpson jokes in the studio behind him.

Neil Young was meanwhile honouring Cobain's loss on *Sleeps With Angels*, released the week before *After The Storm*, and finding himself accepted as the new generation's elder and equal; the next year, Pearl Jam would become his backing band. CSN were incapable of such a leap. But, with a re-energised Crosby back "writing all the time", their second album of the '90s was far from irrelevant. As Nash had promised, it also showed more acquaintance with "the streets" than might have reasonably been supposed.

The snap of Jody Cortez's snare on Stills' opening "Only Waiting For You" showed the muscular, performance-focused sound Johns settled on. As Stills went on to confess to being a "*basket-case*", deeper introspection than usual also seemed on the cards, 'til the song deteriorated into another ode to his latest love (presumably Kristen Hathaway, who he'd marry in 1996).

Nash's "Find A Dream", though, was a loping, moody paean to persistence through passing years. "*Don't be a fool, stay around a long time,*"

TRACK MARKS

1. Only Waiting For You ★★
2. Find A Dream ★★★
3. Camera ★★★★
4. Unequal Love ★★
5. Till It Shines ★★★
6. It Won't Go Away ★★★★
7. These Empty Days ★★★
8. In My Life ★★★★
9. Street To Lean On ★★★★
10. Bad Boyz ★★★★
11. After The Storm ★★★
12. Panama ★★

Label: Atlantic
Produced by: Glyn Johns
Recorded at: O'Henry Sound Studios, Burbank; Groove Masters, Santa Monica; Ocean Way Studios, Hollywood
Personnel: David Crosby (vocals, guitar), Stephen Stills (vocals, guitar, piano), Graham Nash (vocals, acoustic guitar, harmonica), Ethan Johns (drums, percussion, mandocello), Michael Finnigan (organ), Chris Stills (acoustic guitar, Spanish guitar, piano), Michael Hedges (guitar), Craig Doerge and Joe Rotondi (keyboards), Benmont Tench (Hammond B-3), James "Hutch" Hutchinson, Alexis Sklaverski and Daniel "Freebo" Friedberg (bass), Rick Marotta, Tris Imboden and Jody Cortez (drums), Rafael Padilla and Lenny Castro (percussion), Jen Stills (backing vocals)
Highest chart position: UK – ; US 98

he urged as Stills added Young-like buzzes of feedback, even if "*time is a cut to the bone*". Elsewhere, Nash's "Unequal Love" rested on a "Suspicious Minds"-like guitar figure and Benmont Tench's shadowing Hammond more than the song itself.

Crosby, on the other hand, could now open a song like this: "*I rode my bike into town today/ Wobbling down the path/Knew the kids could see me/I love it when they laugh/And I wish I were a camera/I could slice time like a knife.*" Backed by Lenny Castro's Latin percussion, "Camera" dug into the camerawork of his dad – the great Hollywood cinematographer Floyd Crosby – in South American jungles "*before the war*", and out into space, where he wished to photograph the future and see souls through his lens. And for all the lyrics' effortless cosmic ranging, who could forget fat old Croz wobbling and chortling on his bike? If nothing else, a year in the joint had given this Me Generation avatar overdue perspective.

CROSBY followed up with "Till It Shines", his voice gaining a cutting, disgusted edge as righteous cynicism spiked the CSN brew and Mike Finnigan's vamping keys and Stills' guitar took an intimate dance.

> Nash's "Find A Dream" was a loping, moody paean to persistence

Equally impressive was that acerbic song of "the streets", "Street To Lean On", in which he observed a "*bag lady*" and "*gangbangers*" with more sympathy than the Young of "Welfare Mothers" managed. At a time when Compton gangsta rap defined LA as Laurel Canyon once had, Stills, too, unexpectedly rose to the moment. "It Won't Go Away" decried media manipulators and demagogues who distracted white Americans with fears of "people of colour". It's one of CSN's least dated songs, unfortunately. His unpromisingly titled "Bad Boyz" then went one better, as he entered the heads of "children" forced to be loud and violent on streets where "*someone is always in your face/It's almost like being raped/ You're so defenceless.*" Stills' solo here is righteously angry as he concludes: "*The plantation, today it's called the hood.*"

By moving contrast, an acoustic cover of The Beatles' "In My Life" gained personal and generational resonance as those three blessed voices reflected on lengthening pasts where "*some are dead and some are living*". When Crosby, Stills and Nash crooned that they "*loved you more*", the real Woodstock's hopes lived again in their harmonies.

It turned out they couldn't connect. Woodstock '94's poisoned chalice convinced fewer people than ever that they needed another CSN album in their lives. At least its makers knew that their talents were still engaged enough to have outrun nostalgia. ●

CROSBY, STILLS & NASH

Crosby, Stills and Nash solo in the 1990s

RELEASED 1991–1998

The decade ends on a CSNY album. In the meantime, tentative solo outings are the order of the day. Croz, especially, seems to be gaining strength. BY TERRY STAUNTON

On paper, the 1990s represented the busiest decade yet for Crosby, Stills & Nash, with the recording and release of three studio albums, the last of which saw Neil Young also along for the ride. Consequently, solo projects were kept to a minimum, with just David and Stephen bringing one album apiece to market, and the first out of the trap arrived with little fanfare.

Less than 12 months after the trio's *Live It Up*, Stills was back in the studio for a collection that was perhaps at least partly a reaction to the busy, scattergun approach he'd taken on 1984's *Right By You*. For *Stills Alone*, he kept himself to himself, its 10 tracks featuring just his guitars accompanying the vocals. And while it should have been the kind of record his fans were crying out for, he struggled to attract major label interest and resorted to putting it out via the indie Gold Hill label.

Today, 28 years after its first release, it remains the most hard-to-find item in his catalogue, yet to be repackaged or reissued in any form. That's a puzzle, because although there are occasional dips in quality it's a fine artefact of Stills doing what he does best.

With the benefit of hindsight, it's likely *Stills Alone* was made out of necessity rather than design, coinciding with the first inklings of the hearing difficulties he would speak of more candidly in years to come. Perhaps mindful there was a problem but yet to seek out a precise diagnosis, an acoustic album largely comprising material with which he was already familiar was a comfortable move, testing the waters as to how serious the affliction might be.

There's a sense that it was a quickie expedition where he was reluctant to spend too long over its making, the total running time of the finished product barely creeping over the half-hour mark. In truth, it's essentially an album Stills might have made 20 years earlier; an unassuming soft-rock set that's more in keeping with the nascent Laurel Canyon scene. Indeed, "Singin' Call" was first heard on 1971's *Stephen Stills 2*, but the new radically stripped-back rendition puts the focus more fully on his dextrous playing, while "Amazonia" is another oldie dusted off and repurposed for this exercise in minimalism.

His guitar work is even more impressive on the traditional "Blind Fiddler", recalling the more blues-infused selections of his days in Buffalo Springfield, and a rustic take on Bob Dylan's "The Ballad Of Hollis Brown". However, his attempts at adapting The Beatles' "In My Life" into a prairie lament suffers from a decision to sing it in a key that creates too much of challenge for his higher register.

The clear highlight of the set is the closing "Treetop Flyer", in which returning Vietnam veterans get their own back on an uncaring government by putting the helicopter skills they learned for combat to inventive use as drug runners. It's an eloquent and engrossing paean to outsiders that, like much of the album, seems rooted in an earlier time, both musically and culturally.

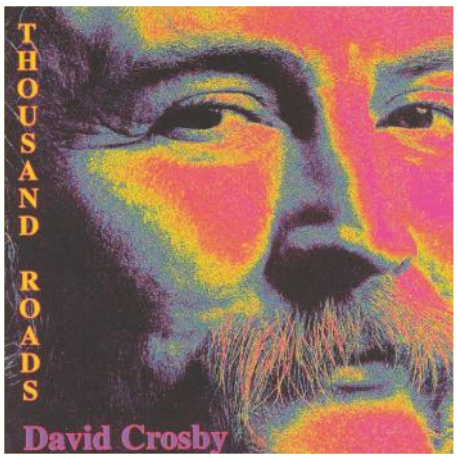
If *Stills Alone* was the ultimate in self-sufficiency, Crosby's *Thousand Roads*, released two years later, was an open-door free-for-all with dubious results.

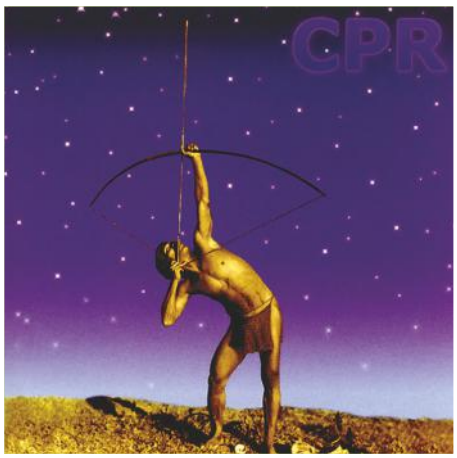
Seven producers are credited across the 10 tracks, and alarm bells begin to sound from the first note of "Hero", a mawkish power ballad co-written by and performed with Phil Collins. The lyric's intermittent allusions to Croz's past troubles notwithstanding, it's bogged down with cookie-cutter sentiment and a dirge-like melody.

Thankfully, his one solo writing credit, the title track, is a weightier illustration of self-reflection. "*I used to walk around with my eyes on fire, my nerves real close to my skin,*" he sings to a sombre folk-blues accompaniment, while never fooling himself that the dark side has been banished for good. It concludes, "*I have no answers, got no patented path to set you free/ Besides, I wouldn't know where you wanted to go, and it's probably not the same place as me.*"

The only other song where his name appears in brackets is the Joni Mitchell co-write "Yvette In English" (it would also appear on Mitchell's *Turbulent Indigo* the following year); playfully jazzy and understated, it's arguably his most direct and emotive vocal outside of his work with Stills and Nash.

In the main, however, *Thousand Roads* is





a healthy showcase for Crosby's powers of interpretation, in which he brings an atmosphere of autobiographical narrative drama to Jimmy Webb's "Too Young To Die" ("*I recall my so-called misspent youth/It seems more worthwhile every single day*"), John Hiatt's "Through Your Hands" and Marc Cohn's "Old Soldier".

It's possible that Crosby is intentionally using the words of others to articulate his own place in the world, as both an artist and a man, although the chopping and changing of moods that's an inevitable by-product of an album on which no one collaborator keeps the producer's chair warm for too long results in a fragmented whole.

WHILE *Stills Alone* and *Thousand Years* are nigh on polar opposites in terms of how they were put together (the former a resolutely one-man show, the latter a hectic merry-go-round with an extensive guest list), what unites them is poor performances, sales-wise. Subsequently, Stills has all but disowned his album, reluctant to this day to answer interviewers' questions about its creation, while Crosby has rarely sung anything from his record at subsequent live shows.

Ultimately both can be seen as temporary pit-stops at a time in both men's careers when they put greater emphasis on the music they were making as part of a famed trio or quartet. Each record has its specific worth, but few fans would make a case for either being essential.

The close of the decade brought with it an intriguing coda in Crosby's ongoing recovery and rehabilitation, a side project involving jazz guitarist Jeff Pevar and keyboard player James Raymond – the grown-up son Crosby knew "was out there" but had never met until the elder man was being treated for liver failure. The trio released three albums in the space of 18 months; two live sets bookending the eponymously witty *CPR*, on which father and son prove to be a formidable writing partnership.

The end of the decade brought an intriguing coda in Crosby's ongoing recovery

It's most keenly heard on "Morrison", a tribute to Jim, an old friend who Croz felt was misrepresented by Oliver Stone in the Doors biopic ("I have seen that movie, and it wasn't like that"). The song's hybrid of familiar folk tropes and more urban jazz motifs are a pointer to the style Crosby would pursue even further on subsequent solo projects, while another standout, "At The Edge", finds him giving thanks for having endured an onslaught of (largely self-inflicted) difficulties over an extraordinary lengthy period of time.

Everybody loves a survivor's tale, and Croz told his with panache and more than a touch of self-effacing humour. A man who many thought wouldn't be around to see the 21st century was now fighting fit and in strong shape to make up for lost time in the coming new millennium. Before that, another professional reunion beckoned. ●

TRACK MARKS

STEPHEN STILLS
STILLS ALONE
VISION/GOLD HILL, 1991
★★★
Produced by: Stephen Stills et al
Recorded at: Audio Vision, Miami
Highest chart position:
UK – ; US –

DAVID CROSBY
Thousand Roads
ATLANTIC, 1993
★★★
Produced by: Phil Collins et al
Recorded at: various
Highest chart position:
UK – ; US 133

CPR
CPR
SAMSON MUSIC, 1998
★★★
Produced by: David Crosby et al
Recorded at: Groove Masters, LA
Highest chart position:
UK – ; US –

CROSBY STILLS NASH & YOUNG

Looking Forward

RELEASED OCTOBER 26, 1999

An out-of-contract CSN meet Y in reflective mood. Spontaneous if not especially forward-looking work ensues.

BY JON DALE

THOUGH very much a fixture of the 1969/1970 counterculture – exploring a personal interior landscape while still being inflamed by events in the outside world – CSNY also contrived to be of a piece with the late 1990s. This was also an inward-looking time, and Young was exploring his own past, looking for inspiration to the birth of Crazy Horse and, as the decade moved on, to Buffalo Springfield.

It was while working with Stephen Stills on a Buffalo Springfield boxset that Young became interested in the recording situation of his sometime colleagues. Having tired of success in the middle of the road, in the mid-1970s Neil famously relocated to the ditch; now, he discovered, Crosby Stills & Nash were very much in the commercial ditch, though not of their own choosing. Having ended their long relationship with Atlantic, who they felt hadn't exactly exerted themselves supporting their recent work, when the trio now recorded music, they did so on their own dime.

It's tempting to think of this as a further step along the road of self-actualisation begun with their '70s output, the political sensibility of being up against "the man", but in reality things were rather more prosaically commercial. However, it was a development that drew Young back to the fold – "Crosby, Stills and Nash were in the studio," he told a reporter at the time. "They'd taken out a loan to finance the record. They'd dumped their record company and they were making the record on their own, so I figured, 'Well hey! If they're doing that, it shows they're really into it.'"

That's one part of *Looking Forward*'s genesis. Young had also been busy in the studio, at work on his album *Silver & Gold*, in 1998. Hearing some of the material that CSN were working on, Young was freshly impressed. "Neil came in one day when we were playing a certain piece of music," Nash recalled. "'I love that. What else you got, man?' he said. We played him the other tracks, and then he pulled out one of his songs, and we were off and running."

They took a number of different approaches to recording; some was live, together in the studio, some were overdubs of previously existing tracks. Young encouraged the group to do their harmonies around one mic, in real time, a process he called "air mixing". Reflecting on the way the album came about, with Young's involvement almost by chance, Nash said, "That's how fragile and solid this band is."

Looking Forward is an odd beast. It's hard to begrudge the quartet their newfound independence and perhaps a newly minted level of friendship, but it's an album that suffers for a number of reasons – the piecemeal approach to recording; the sheer number of hands on deck; most importantly, though, the diminishing returns that can be sadly inevitable when artists are working together decades after their prime. This is not always the case, of course – Young has continued to release inspired, affecting albums over the decades; Crosby has offered up some strong solo material in recent years – but *Looking Forward* is far from CSN or Y's most enduring moment.

"Faith In Me" starts things off in, well, uninspiring territory. The song is little more than a schoolyard chant; the playing has a liquidity that means all the instruments turn into a weirdly funky mess. A poolside, rich-guys-on-holiday sunniness prevails, to the song's detriment. Really, it's hard to tell whether we're thinking about funk the genre or funk the smell. It's not exactly an auspicious beginning.

Thankfully, from there things do improve – even if, at times, that improvement is marginal. Young steers "Looking Forward" into becalmed *Harvest* territory, an acoustic meander with some pretty perfunctory lyrics: "*Looking*

CRITICS' VERDICTS

"In recent years, Young's creativity has far outshone his old colleagues, and he is once again the most prolific here. Only the bouncy 'Queen Of Them All' sounds like a genuine band effort, and apart from some trademark CSN harmonies, his other three mellow contributions could just as easily have come from a solo album."
Nigel Williamson, Uncut, November 1999

forward all I can see/Is good times for you and for me."

Crosby nudges things onto tougher terrain with "Stand And Be Counted", the latest iteration of his ongoing quest to write protest songs that never quite pin down exactly what they're protesting; there's a vagueness to his messaging here that could, generously, be read as opening the song out to multiple interpretations. At times, though, it's little more than platitude, though the song's saved by some impressively crunchy guitars. Those three songs seem, mostly, to capture the prevailing vibes for *Looking Forward* – languid and loose; bucolic, sometimes in a melancholy way; and vaguely agitated. Perhaps the biggest development is the way the "air mixing" gives their harmonies a churchy, massed resonance, a shift from earlier albums, where CSNY's voices threaded together in spindly, spider's-web complexes.

It's a little too easy to entirely write off *Looking Forward* as the collective indulgence of four singer-songwriters long past their peak, though. Some of the loveliest, most compelling moments land about halfway through the set. Young's "Slowpoke" might be a variation on a well-worn theme, from its glinting acoustic guitars to Young's low-key ruminations, but it's a gorgeous performance, his voice capturing the nuances of the melody in a beautifully downtrodden way: "*Slowpoke, we got some things to find/When I was faster I was always behind.*" "Out Of Control", a gently wandering song for piano and band, may have benefited from even starker production, but Young's melody here is truly lovely; Nash's "Someday Soon" is a late-period gem from the man, its country-folk lilt perfectly poised.

> Young encouraged the group to do their harmonies around one mic, in real time

SOME of *Looking Forward*'s songs appear as early takes – "Neil always prefers earlier takes of songs," Nash told Debbie Kruger. "He believes, as we all do, that after six or seven performances of any song you begin to perform it rather than feel it."

It's tempting to think what might have been had they stuck with first takes only, allowed some rawness through – one of the major issues with *Looking Forward* is that it lacks any rough edges to catch yourself on, or to catch you unawares. It might seem like too much to ask for an element of surprise or brusqueness from a CSNY album, particularly in their third decade. Soon enough, though, big political questions would wake them out of their collective torpor. Think of *Looking Forward* as clearing the cobwebs out of the way for some altogether more surprising, politically charged action, in half a decade's time. ●

TRACK MARKS

1. Faith In Me ★
2. Looking Forward ★★★
3. Stand And Be Counted ★★
4. Heartland ★★
5. Seen Enough ★★
6. Slowpoke ★★★★
7. Dream For Him ★★
8. No Tears Left ★★
9. Out Of Control ★★★★
10. Someday Soon ★★★
11. Queen Of Them All ★★
12. Sanibel ★★

Label: Reprise
Produced by: David Crosby, Stephen Stills, Graham Nash, Neil Young, Joe Vitale, Ben Keith, Stanley Johnston
Recorded at: Redwood Digital, Woodside; Ga Ga's Room, LA; Conway Studios, Hollywood; Ocean Studies, Burbank
Personnel: David Crosby (guitar, vocals), Stephen Stills (guitar, Hammond B-3, bass, double bass, percussion, maracas, vocals), Graham Nash (guitar, vocals), Neil Young (guitar, harmonica, tiple, celeste, vocals), Denny Sarokin and Snuffy Garrett (guitar); Ben Keith (pedal steel guitar, dobro); Donald "Duck" Dunn, Gerald Johnson, James "Hutch" Hutchinson and Bob Glaub (bass), Michael Finnigan (Hammond B-3), Spooner Oldham (keyboards, pump organ), James Raymond (piano), Craig Doerge (keys); Joe Vitale (drums, Hammond B-3, batas); Jim Keltner (drums), Luis Conte (congas, jombe bass drum, batas), Alex Acuña (timbales), Joe Lala (congas), Lenny Castro and Vince Charles (percussion)
Highest chart position: UK 54; US 26

Flag day: Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young on stage at the Air Canada Centre, Toronto, July 10, 2006

STEVE RUSSELL/TORONTO STAR VIA GETTY IMAGES

"It's a benevolent dictatorship. Neil is in charge"

Amid death threats and crowd abuse, CSNY take a combative political show on the road at "warlord" Young's behest. En route they revisit 30 years of cancer battles, multi-million-dollar drug addictions, Woodstock idealism, and pointless rows over pizza that saw "a lot of music wasted". "Young, inexperienced guys with a whole lot of money is a recipe for disaster in life," Crosby tells ALASTAIR McKAY. "We ran into cocaine and heroin. Oops!"

Young, Nash, Geoffrey Gilmore (director of the Sundance Film Festival), Crosby and Stills at the premiere of *CSNY/Déjà Vu* at the Eccles Center, Park City, Utah, January 25, 2008

GEORGE PIMENTEL/WIREIMAGE

UNCUT JULY 2008

LET'S say it's April 2006, by which time Neil Young's simmering anger at America's invasion of Iraq and the slaughter going on there during the subsequent occupation comes to what you might call boiling point. In nine frantic days, he writes, records and releases *Living With War*, an album of coruscating fury at the Bush administration, its demented War On Terror and the havoc it's wreaking in the Middle East, which provokes an unprecedented right-wing backlash – Neil demonised by conservative ultras and the hawkish pro-Bush media. Undaunted by the fierce criticism of the record, he now thinks about taking it on the road.

Living With War had been recorded in a day, with Neil joined only by drummer Chad Cromwell and bassist Rick Rosas, plus occasional interventions from Tommy Brea's forlorn trumpet. The songs were rough and raw, and fuelled by rage, though some of the harder edges were softened by the addition of a hastily convened 100-voice choir.

This was not a record made with a career plan in mind. It was Young working at the far edges of instinct, and with a sense of urgency he has rarely shown since the Kent State massacre of 1970 – when the National Guard shot dead four students protesting against Nixon's invasion of Cambodia – prompted him to write "Ohio". And, just as that record was issued immediately, so *Living With War* was rush-released within weeks of its recording. It was a brazen, brilliant move – reconnecting Young with his roots as a folk singer, and shattering the sense of a career drifting into the twilight.

The songs on *Living With War* had no room at all for subtlety. They were all about making a point and moving on. They were, in essence, punk, which makes it even more surprising that Young now decides to take the songs on the road with his former CSNY bandmates, with whom he has had such a fractious history. The garage rock of his more primal backing band, Crazy Horse, would perhaps have been a more obvious fit. But then being obvious isn't part of who Neil Young is.

There is also something pragmatically calculating about Young's alliance with Crosby, Stills and Nash for the dates that follow in the summer of 2006. He knows more people will come to see CSNY than they would to see him solo, such is the affection – much tested, but to many still undiminished – for a band who, before they were driven apart by conflicting egos, drugs and an apparent inability to occupy the same space without soon being at each others' throats, had assumed, with 1970's multi-million selling *Déjà Vu*, the status of "the American Beatles".

Young's bold-faced strategy is evident when you watch *CSNY/Déjà Vu* – his new documentary film about what became the Freedom Of Speech tour – when it becomes clear Young made a deliberate choice to hijack a schedule that had already been booked, and then dictate his terms.

"I called them up," Young tells *Uncut*, "and said, 'Listen, I made this record, you should listen to it, as this is what I want to do. I want to do all the songs on the record in the show. I don't want to focus on anything else and I don't want you to focus on anything else.'"

There would be room for nostalgia in the set, but only if the songs supported the mission: saving whales, for example, was off the agenda.

"We're going to do a tour that's focused on this type of music and this subject," Young insisted. "We don't want to take away from the intensity by diverting ourselves into little side trips."

Young's demands were precise. Nothing was to distract from the message. There was to be no loose talk, no rambling introductions to the songs, no glib statements about politics, no taunting of the president. There was to be no repeat, essentially, of the Monterey Pop festival in 1967, where David Crosby decided to use the platform to share his sincere belief that President Kennedy had been killed by more

than one gunman.

In most previous incarnations in their troubled history, such discipline would have been unthinkable. But how easily were David Crosby, Graham Nash and Stephen Stills, none of them known for easily toeing anyone's line, persuaded to buckle to Neil's will?

"From when Neil first called and said, 'Come over, I've got some music for you to listen to', from that moment, we knew that we wanted to support him," Graham Nash tells *Uncut*. "We knew that we wanted to sing those songs. We knew the importance of the direction of the tour and we went right along with it. We completely agreed with what Neil was trying to do."

"As musicians, our role is largely to entertain you," David Crosby adds. "And make you boogie. But there's also the troubadour part, the town crier part. 'It's 11.30 and all's well', or, 'It's 12 o'clock and there's a chimpanzee loose in the White House and things aren't so damn good.' That's part of our job. But, let me tell you, if we hadn't liked those songs, we wouldn't have played them.

But those things need to be said, and we were proud to say 'em."

Stephen Stills, whose cocaine-fuelled megalomania had done so much to destructively contribute to the squandered promise of CSNY, was perhaps typically, even after all these years, reluctant to immediately commit himself.

"I had to work with Stephen a little bit," Young admits. "He knew there'd be a political impact, and at first he didn't want to do it. He does not like negativity. He says often, 'I don't want anybody throwing anything at me.' He's easily hurt. He's easily damaged by people saying bad things about him. I understand that, I understand that he's sensitive, so I tried to defuse that coming right at him, because we're brothers. He gets hurt by this. It's a funny thing. The same thing that makes him sensitive is what makes him a great guitar player and has given him the ability to write some great songs."

"Neil was very careful to note my misgivings or ambivalence about the whole deal," Stills recalls. "Because there was a part of me that was saying, 'This is so over the top, we're just going to galvanise the Republican base.'

"Because at the last election, there was a lot of antipathy about the big concerts [*the Rock The Vote Tour, featuring Bruce Springsteen, REM, Pearl Jam and more*]. And, of course, some of the songs, in Bush country, I was expecting the boos and catcalls from that wonderful 20 per cent of America that just, you know, they're always there... They'll always be that way and there's no convincing 'em of anything. And some family members wanted to come to the concert, and by the end of it they were giving Neil the finger."

"It was easy to do these songs with Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young," Neil concludes. "There was a link [*to our past*], you could feel it. I didn't think about it when I started doing it. That was kind of an epiphany that just happened, and then we kept going in that direction. Quite often, there's no plan. You just keep alive, you keep your eyes open, and everything reveals itself. You pick some berries and you leave some behind."

So would it be safe to say that after nigh-on four decades of continuous acrimony, failed reunions and competitive ego wars, that CSNY have at last achieved a mutual equity? A communal sense of shared purpose?

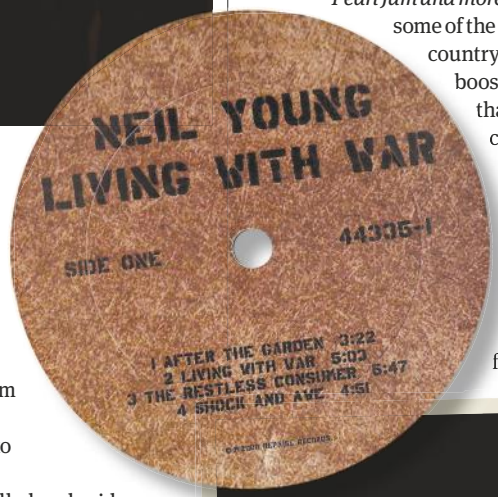
Not quite, according to an aside from Crosby in the movie. Asked to explain the current power structure in this famously fractious group, he replies: "CSNY is not a democracy. It's a dictatorship. But it's a benevolent dictatorship. Neil," he says, "is in charge".

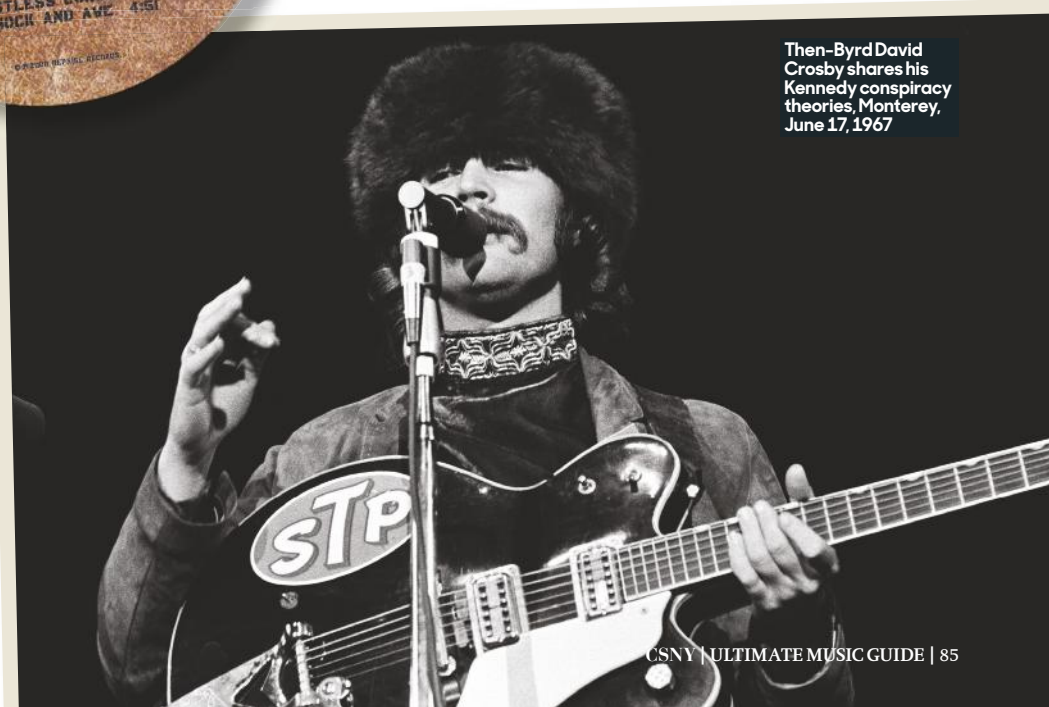
> "Neil seemed a nice guy, we all got along, and then... we didn't"
>
> **DALLAS TAYLOR**

Uncut then asks Neil Young if, for this tour at least, he was prepared more than usual to play the diplomat. "Not necessarily," he laughs. "I think I was more of a warlord."

CSNY/Déjà Vu opens with a *Rock'n'Roll Years*-style montage of history and music that places Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young in a pantheon of protest singers alongside Phil Ochs and Bob Dylan. The historical parallel is obvious: yesterday's Vietnam is today's Iraq, and the Freedom Of Speech Tour is an attempt to inject some of CSNY's countercultural DNA into the troubled politics of the Bush era.

The link between then and now is Woodstock, the August 1969 festival that remains a high point of the idealism of the hippie movement, or the beginning of its end, depending on who is holding the slide-rule. For CSNY, whose ➤





Then-Byrd David Crosby shares his Kennedy conspiracy theories, Monterey, June 17, 1967

MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES)

"All of a sudden we were this huge bunch of people": Woodstock begins, August 15, 1969

BETTMANN/CORBIS/BETTMANN ARCHIVE

performance that day catapulted them into the rock stratosphere, the festival seems to have included both possibilities.

Perhaps more than anyone at the festival, CSNY's fortunes were transformed by their appearance at Woodstock. There were incendiary displays from The Who and Sly Stone, and Jimi Hendrix's violent deconstruction of the "Star Spangled Banner" remains an unsurpassed moment of musical protest, but something about CSNY's performance endeared them to the mass audience who went to see Michael Wadleigh's *Woodstock* documentary.

"What was so cool about them was that they represented community," Wadleigh says. "Rarely has rock'n'roll had harmonies like that from four guys that sing and play so beautifully and are folky. It would have been great if one of them had been a woman or a transvestite. Too bad that they're all males, too bad that they're all white. At least we had one Brit. But here were these four long-haired guys who seemed to have such camaraderie: the four musketeers. And their songs were fantastic for the time."

One reason for CSNY's indelible association with Woodstock is that they performed, on the film's soundtrack, Joni Mitchell's theme song (written by Mitchell in a New York hotel room, watching TV footage of the festival, and used in the movie at the persuasive insistence of David Geffen, who otherwise would probably have vetoed the already sparse footage of CSNY). "She wanted CSNY to do it," says Wadleigh. "She wanted that kind of community sound, the choral multi-harmony thing. I think she also wanted the more rock'n'roll sound that they could give."

"We went on around 10 at night. It was fragile, tense," Graham Nash remembers. "It was our second show ever, and there was a tremendous amount of people out there, and we only had one guitar for 'Guinnevere', for instance. And it was acoustic. The conditions weren't great, and the weather wasn't great. But the spirit was fantastic. We were brought together with common feelings.

"We felt that love was better than hatred, that peace was better than war. I think the myth of Woodstock has gotten larger over the years since it happened. But I was glad to be there. It was a defining moment, where two things crossed. One, corporations began to realise that if you could get half a million kids together and sell them all a pair of Nikes and Coca-Cola, your business was going to go up. And it also became: 'These kids from garage bands are monster stars now.'"

"Did I believe in the Woodstock Nation?" Stills asks, giving voice to his original cynicism.

"It was lost on me. They were mostly Grateful Dead people."

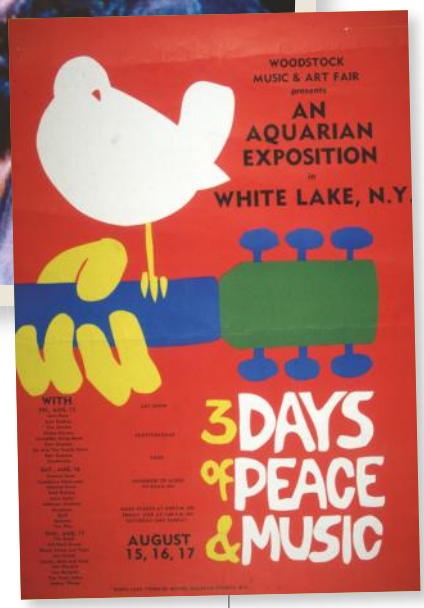
"It's an odd thing to me," adds David Crosby, "because Woodstock gets aggrandised so much in history. It gets bigger every year. When it goes further away, it looks bigger. Things usually shrink when they go in the distance, but Woodstock keeps getting bigger. I think the real significance of it was that we discovered how many of us there were, and we sort of had a wake-up. Up to that point, we had been scattered hippies. And then all of a sudden, we were this huge bunch of people, all feeling pretty similarly about things. And that was a very big turnaround."

Three months before Woodstock, Crosby, Stills and Nash – who had come together after falling out with their previous bands, The Byrds, Buffalo Springfield and The Hollies – had released their eponymous debut album. By July it was in the American Top 10, selling millions, and would stay on the charts for two more years. They were already huge as a trio, but Stills, who had played most of the instruments on the album himself, shaping the record's sound in long sessions with drummer Dallas Taylor, felt they needed an additional musician to play the songs live. Steve Winwood was briefly considered, then Atlantic label boss Ahmet Ertegun – a big fan of the Springfield who'd been baffled by the lack of commercial success of the albums he'd released on his Atco imprint – suggested Neil Young, despite his often combative relationship with Stills, which had hastened that band's demise.

Surprisingly, given the conflicts that would soon follow, Stills agreed. Young, whose own solo career had yet to take off, had everything to gain from the exposure of joining CSN – with an insistence, which he said was "non-negotiable", on equal billing – and nothing to lose.

So by the time they played Woodstock, CSN had become CSNY, and in the moment of their most public triumph, there was an inkling of the tensions to come between Young and his new bandmates. Watch the *Woodstock* movie closely, and you'll be hard-pressed to catch even

"We had a wake-up": Stills and Crosby at Woodstock, August 17, 1969



a glimpse of Young, who had little interest in playing to the cameras. Michael Wadleigh, though, disputes the claim that Young refused to be filmed.

"That's not true," he insists. "You can see him in a number of the shots. After all, they're really only shown singing 'Judy Blue Eyes'. Neil became more separate later on. But the story's bullshit. It's the same with the Grateful Dead. The only reason the Dead were left out of the film was their set was so fucking bad, it was wretched. Same with The Band."

LA Johnson, however, who worked as Wadleigh's assistant on *Woodstock* and has since become a collaborator on all Young's film projects, says that Neil did refuse to be filmed.

"In the credits we had it as 'Crosby, Stills, Nash'. It doesn't say, 'Crosby, Stills and Nash'. I had to take Neil's name off. He didn't want to be in the movie. He was conflicted about that at the time. He was a late addition to that group."

As far as drummer Dallas Taylor is concerned, that late addition of Neil to the original trio was the moment everything started to sour and the story of CSNY becomes a perfect miniature of the contradictions of the hippie dream, which rewarded a few artists with extraordinary wealth, creating a separate caste of pampered superstar musicians, whose increasingly cosseted, druggy existence was remote from the society they had set out to change.

"Relationships were OK until Neil joined the band, frankly," Dallas Taylor admits to *Uncut*. "Then they went downhill very rapidly. Everybody started to squabble. By the end of the first tour, we were barely talking to each other.

"It was the egos. I think Neil had a great band on his own [*Crazy Horse*], and the whole idea of bringing him into the band was drawn up by lawyers, so you can take it from there. We met him and he seemed like a nice guy and we got along for a while, and then," he adds darkly, "we didn't."

"We blew it," Graham Nash says, looking back at the uncontrollable conflicts that would destroy CSNY. "Because of our own naive, childish attitudes, we blew it. Even though we made a lot of fine music together, there was a lot of music that was wasted."

The tensions that had been evident at Woodstock grew ever more palpable during the dates that followed the festival, culminating in a full-scale blow-up backstage at New York's Fillmore East, the toxic fallout of which seeped poisonously into the sessions for *Déjà Vu*, which was recorded over many painful months at Wally Heider's studio in San Francisco, where Crosby and Stills constantly fought, their enmity fuelled by the massive amounts of drugs that Stills, especially, was daily consuming. It was a far and bitter cry from the largely harmonious sessions that had produced their first album, when the three original band members had worked together with a mostly uncomplicated enthusiasm.

"There's a reason for that," Nash explains to *Uncut*. "We were all in love on the first record. I was in love with Joni. David was in love with Christine [*Hinton*], Stephen was in love with Judy Collins. It was a love thing. We were in love with each other. We had discovered each other's music and we had discovered something together that was phenomenal. And after that, I'd split with Joni, Stephen and Judy were no longer an item, and Christine was killed [*in a car crash, near the Marin County home she shared with Crosby*]. It was just different. One album was inviting and warm and soft and gentle, and the other was four people that were angry."

> "Woodstock was lost on me. They were mostly Grateful Dead people"
> **STEPHEN STILLS**

Matters were not aided by the blizzard of cocaine that was now attendant at every session.

"We had no idea it was addictive," says Dallas Taylor, a former heroin addict who now works as a drugs counsellor. "In fact, we were told it wasn't. Stephen didn't even smoke pot at the time, but when we found cocaine, he just went insane. We always looked to him as the leader of the band, and that's when he kind of lost it."

"All of a sudden, we had the money, we had the access, we had the deadlines," Stills recalls, "and we overindulged."

"Young, inexperienced guys with a whole lot of money is a recipe for disaster in life," says Crosby, who, following Hinton's death, embarked on what would become years of drug-induced madness.

"It was quite sudden and quite deadly in many cases," says Nash of the corruptive influence of the cocaine and heroin that had replaced pot and acid as the band's choice of narcotics. "It was a bad scene all around. It certainly put the three or four of us in moods that were less than groovy."

Nash still remembers vividly the endless arguments during the *Déjà Vu* sessions, and the long days and nights in the studio. The disagreements, he says, were largely trivial.

"'What do you mean my pizza's cold?' Silly stuff," he recalls. "We were living at the Caravan Lodge motel in the Tenderloin district of San Francisco. We all had our rooms. Neil had his room. But Neil had bush babies. Harriet and Speedy, two bush babies, lived in the motel with Neil. Oh man, it was insanity. You'd go and say, 'Come on, Neil, let's go to breakfast.' He'd open the door and Harriet and Speedy would be bouncing off the walls. I don't know what happened to those two bush babies. And I have no idea why he had them in the motel, actually. They just turned up: 'Harriet and Speedy are my new friends, man,'" he says, offering an impersonation of a zoned-out Young.

"Oh, it was an awful hotel," he goes on. "But it was literally 70 feet from the studio. So that was why we were there. Interesting time, man. I wonder if anyone will ever write the story. I wonder if anyone could write the story. Insanity."

For Dallas Taylor, the rot really set in during those sessions.

"Money started to become an issue," he says. Taylor was not enamoured with David Geffen, who was managing the band alongside Elliot Roberts and doing deals that allowed them to indulge their less idealistic whims. "Geffen was a tough businessman," Taylor says. "He never did anything for me, that's for sure. He took my 20 per cent, and never helped my career at all. He was not a nice human being." ➤

FOTOS INTERNATIONAL/GETTY IMAGES, BLANK ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES

Wasted on the Young: Crosby, Nash and Stills in the studio, 1969

Clearly, Taylor's bitterness at being edged out of the group has not waned over the years.

"It happened during the *Déjà Vu* tour, where Neil slammed his guitar down on the stage and stomped off. He wanted to continue the tour with the three of them and me. He wanted to fire Stills, and I sided with Stills, and that was my biggest mistake. So the way I understand it, it was 'Dallas goes or Stills goes, one or the other.'"

For Graham Nash, the disintegration of CSNY at this point mirrored the drift into dissolution of the hippie dream he had witnessed on the streets of San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury, where he'd lived since 1969.

"The Haight was a gathering point for energy, but it dragged in all the bad energy, too, all the heroin and all the major drugs and homeless people and people begging and looking for handouts and breaking into houses. It wasn't pleasant. It was at one point, but then it turned nasty.

> "When Neil finished 'Ohio' I called Nash and said, 'Get a studio now!'"
>
> **DAVID CROSBY**

"When you start getting into really bad drugs, where you can put something into your arm and end up dead 30 seconds later, that's the antithesis of what we really wanted to do, which was celebrate life and positive energy and moving forward. When George [*Harrison*] went there with his heart-shaped glasses, that was the beginning of the end of Haight-Ashbury."

It was almost the end, too, for CSNY. Even as the multi-million-selling *Déjà Vu* made them briefly the biggest rock band on the planet, the irreconcilable divisions between them made it impossible for the band to continue. And when the *Déjà Vu* tour ended on July 9, it would be another four years until they appeared together again on the same stage.

There was one last hurrah, however – a single written in anger and outrage by Young about the shooting on May 4, 1970 of four students on the campus of Ohio's Kent State University by National Guardsmen.

"Life jumps up and smacks us in the face sometimes with something that we have to write about," says Crosby of perhaps the band's greatest song. "That's how 'Ohio' happened. Neil and I were at a friend's house in California and the friend brought home that copy of *LIFE* magazine with a girl kneeling over the kid, with that 'Why?' expression on her face, and he looked at the picture for a while, and he picked up his guitar and he started writing 'Ohio'.

"When he finished, I called Nash and said, 'Get a studio right now!' We cut it and gave it to Ahmet Ertegun and we had it out in about a week."

RB/REDFERNS

CSNY already had a single out at the time, Nash's far gentler "Teach Your Children".

"It was headed for the top," says Crosby. "And Nash pulled it so that 'Ohio' could go, which tells you what kind of guy Nash is."

Nash, on the subject of "Ohio", baulks at its apparent representation of Neil as CSNY's radical conscience.

"It's quite strange," he says, "that Neil should be seen as a political animal. It was always Crosby, Stills and Nash that were doing all that other stuff." Maybe he's thinking of Neil – and Stills – refusing to take part in a benefit for the Chicago Seven anti-war protesters, celebrity radicals who'd been arrested at the 1968 Democratic Convention, which in turn inspired Nash's heartfelt "Chicago".

"'Ohio'," he now goes on, "that was not politics. That was a human tragedy. When you slaughter four students who are using their American, God-given right to protest the government, when they got slaughtered, that wasn't politics, that was a human tragedy, and to this day no-one has apologised to the families. So that wasn't a political statement by Neil. That was anger at the death of four students."

"We got fat and lazy, and we paid the price," says Stephen Stills, looking back nigh on 40 years to a time when the world was there for CSNY's taking. "There was a lot of drinking, just bad behaviour and mucking about. And then a few years later, when you get to this age, you start remembering some of the more embarrassing shit you did. And thank God I'm past 60 now, because I can at least laugh at some of the things I did, instead of wanting to crawl into a hole."

The first couple of years after CSNY split were generally good for Stills – he had a hit single with "Love The One You're With" and his first solo album, *Stephen Stills*, initially sold better than Neil's '60s comedown classic, *After The Gold Rush*. Crosby and Nash also scored with their solo albums, *If I Could Only Remember My Name* and *Songs For Beginners*, both released in 1971.

They were soon, however, wholly eclipsed by Neil, whose 1972 album, *Harvest*, made him the biggest-selling solo artist in the world. Although Young would famously turn his back on mainstream success, CSN would live out the rest of their careers in his creative shadow, Neil incrementally assuming an iconic status that in the minds of many placed him alongside Dylan in the thin ranks of '60s veterans whose music continued to matter.

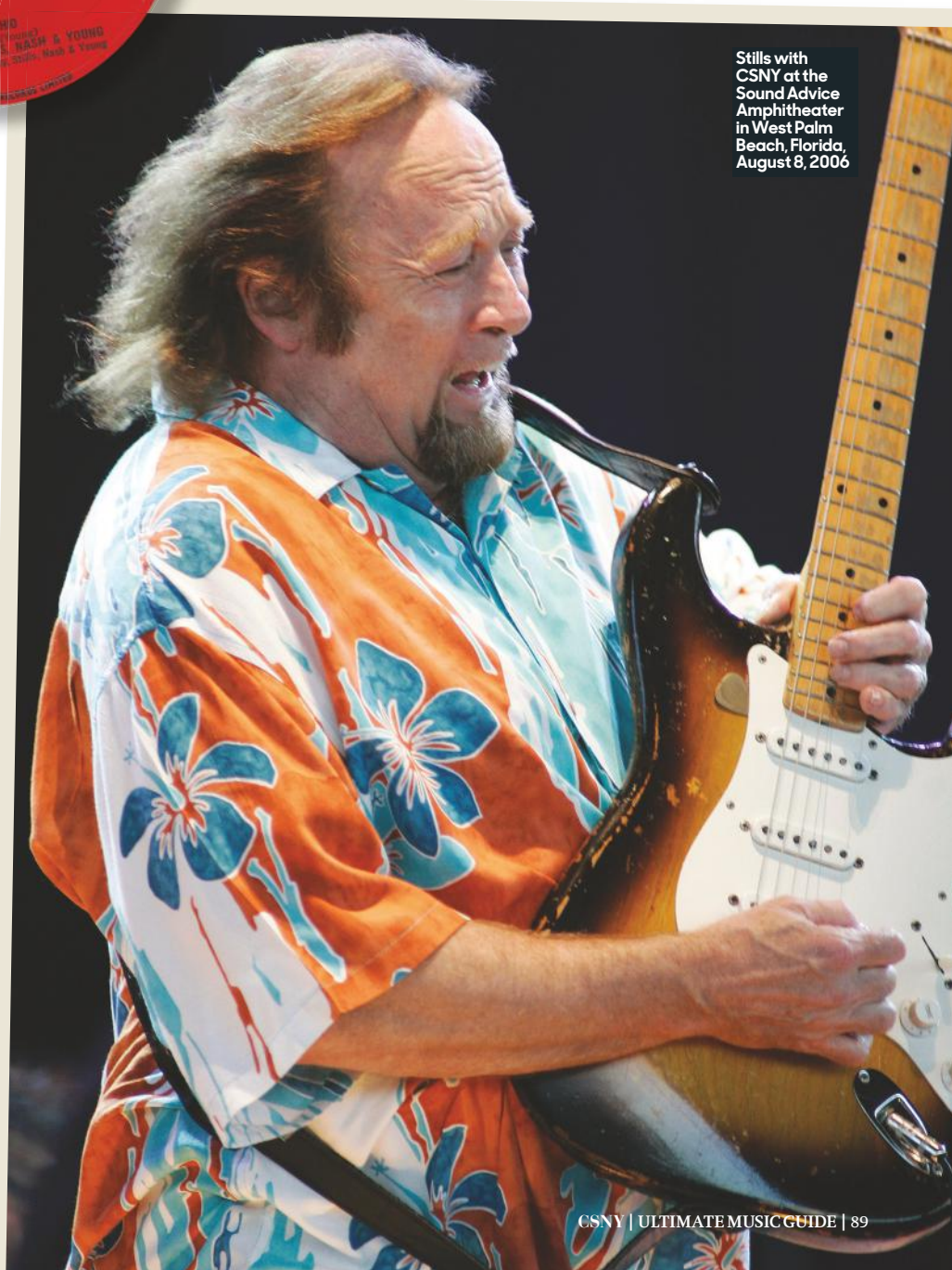
Even as Young's star ascended, Stills' career started to plummet, his descent into cocaine madness scuppering serial CSNY reunions. When the band convened in Maui in 1973 with the intention of recording a new album together, Stills, deranged by coke, had taken to wearing army fatigues, convinced by then that he had seen active service in Vietnam. The *Human Highway* album was quickly aborted. His behaviour on the band's 1974 world tour – "The Doom Tour," as Crosby cheerlessly christened it – was so obnoxious that Young preferred to travel separately from the rest of the band, in an RV, with his son, a sullen witness to a tour that set a new benchmark for decadence, debauchery and excess. Stills' struggle with alcoholism, cocaine and freebasing was long and difficult, his eventual sobriety hard won. He is currently recovering from prostate cancer surgery.

"I'm fine now," he says. "The cancer's gone, and I'm going through all the things that one does when you lose that particular organ, like you have to wait for things to start functioning again. They [*doctors*] lie to you, because if they told you the truth when you're diagnosed, guys would go, 'Oh no, I'm not doing that.' In which case, you fucking end up in a diaper and die. It's not pretty.

"So I took steps immediately. I found out about it. I scheduled the surgery in October, so I had lots of time to prep. And you have to go through a liquid diet for a few days. So that was a lot of pounds that got put on. I looked like a water baby for a few months. In the film, I'd gained 25lb and even made Crosby look good."

Crosby's own career meltdown, meanwhile, was probably even more spectacular.

He has estimated that he spent "many, many millions of dollars" on drugs, and he became addicted to heroin and cocaine. In March 1982, while driving to an anti-nuclear rally near San Clemente, California, Crosby suffered a seizure from cocaine saturation and crashed into the barrier in the centre of the highway. Police found cocaine and a loaded .45 pistol in the vehicle. Two weeks later, he was caught freebasing cocaine ➤



Stills with CSNY at the Sound Advice Amphitheater in West Palm Beach, Florida, August 8, 2006

David Crosby, Stephen Stills & Graham Nash in 1984, the year Nash forswore cocaine for good

EBET ROBERTS/REDFERNS

backstage in Dallas, Texas, and was sentenced to five years in jail. While free on appeal, he fled from rehab, and was jailed in 1985, going cold turkey during his 11 months inside. On his release, he returned to the stage with Nash and vowed to stay sober.

In 1994, around the time of the 25th anniversary of Woodstock, he had to be helped offstage, complaining that he was told he had hepatitis C, and that his liver was failing. He was broke, and he needed a transplant. And, while Crosby claims to have settled down in the aftermath of this shock, he was arrested in 2004 after going back to a New York hotel to retrieve a suitcase that contained marijuana and a loaded .45.

Looking back at all this mayhem, Crosby is not immediately inclined to apologise for his libertarian past and the Woodstock ideal to which he has forever clung.

"There are very few things about it that I think were wrong," he tells *Uncut*. "I think we were right about civil rights. All men are created equal, and we need to enforce that, severely, strongly, with everything we've got. I think peace is better than war. I think the only thing we were wrong about was the drugs and that was only because we were innocent. We didn't know. We had no idea. We'd only encountered pot and psychedelics and we thought they were sort of beneficial and kinda neat. And then we ran into cocaine and heroin. Oops! We were ignorant, and we didn't know. But we survived it."

Nash, eternally cast as the 'sensible one', gave up cocaine on December 9, 1984.

"I remember the date deliberately," he says. "It was the last concert of the Crosby, Stills & Nash tour, in Honolulu. We were at the Kohala Hilton. Having an after-tour party. And all of a sudden I realised that all of these people who were snorting and thought they were having a good time were not having a good time at all.

"It was a completely false thing, and I just hated it. I swore then that I would never snort it again. And I didn't."

Amid all this wreckage, only Young's career has consistently hit the heights of artistic excellence or matched the impact of those early years. The tension may have been as destructive as it was creative, and it was Young's single-mindedness that tore at the fabric of Buffalo Springfield and CSNY, but it's also the quality that makes his work vital. "I don't think he ever thinks about other people's expectations," says LA Johnson. "He does it all for himself. It's about the creativity. It's about doing all the things that he wants to do, and getting them done and enjoying the process. He's a worker."

In which case, it may not be coincidental that the outbreak of peace in CSNY coincides with the acceptance, by CS&N, of the pre-eminence of Y.

"Neil and I get on fine these days," says Stills. "David and Graham and I occasionally have the occasional old married people shit. Sometimes we lose our sense of humour, and that's deadly."

"I don't think we've ever liked each other as much as we do now," says Nash. "When you get a little older, you begin to realise the things that annoyed you about these people years ago were meaningless. OK, so he wants to play it in a different key, so what? Why argue and why shout and scream, and why do all the shit that we did?"

The old antipathies were "stupid things, fuelled by drugs", Nash says. "Stephen asking me to sing a minor vocal melody through a set of major chords, and my body wouldn't do it, 'cos to me it was wrong, just awful-sounding, and he kept trying to force me to do this thing, and I finally threw him out of my house and didn't speak to him for two years.

"It's just the way it is. It's craziness. Young people growing up with fame and money and power and position, and blowing it."

Mike Cerre – who usually reports on real wars, but who found himself "embedded" on the Freedom Of Speech Tour – bore witness to an extraordinary moment of unity, prior to a 2006 show in Washington DC. The previous night, CSNY had played Atlanta. The conservative crowd, offended that the band was leading

a chorus of "let's impeach the president" at a time when troops were in mortal danger, had responded with catcalls, one-fingered salutes, and a partial walkout. The musicians weren't able to fully appreciate the anger of the Atlanta audience, but they were aware that something was happening.

"We knew the hostility was there because we could see the bomb-sniffing dogs," Young says. "When I came back to my hotel at night after the show there would be guards on my room, and when I went in people would go and check behind all the curtains. We chose not to film that part of it, because I just don't want to make that something people think about all the time."

Didn't he thrive on that kind of antagonism?

"No," he says bluntly. "The film thrives on antagonism, but for me, that was the most hair-raising, nerve-wracking, terrible experience. I don't want to do another tour like that! I'd rather be playing with The Rolling Stones."

"Neil was very concerned with the death threats," Cerre says, "and that's why his family wasn't out on tour with him. Before the Washington show, it was like a basketball team gathering before going out on the court. Neil was almost in tears, and he said: 'Guys, I really feel emotional tonight. I just want you to know, I couldn't have done this without you, and I'm so thankful we're all here together to do this.' And they all went around and were just kinda bucking each other up. And I imagine that's what it was like when they were all launching their careers and didn't know where this thing was going."

Musically, things aren't quite so harmonious. Early in *CSNY/Déjà Vu*, snatches of Crosby's "What Are Their Names" and Nash's "Military Madness" serve to underline the suspicion that CSNY were a group of their time, and that time was the pre-punk era. But something sparks when they play the Buffalo Springfield's "For What It's Worth". Yes, the vitality has drained from Stephen Stills' voice, but the intrigue of the song remains, and it fits the War On Terror as neatly as it did Vietnam.

"I've been singing that song a long time," Stills says philosophically, "and it seems lost. I was so young when I wrote that, and it was that visceral instinct. I didn't think about it. And I keep trying to get back there.

"That's also the first music in the film," he goes on. "At the screening at the Sundance Film Festival, I was going, 'Get on with it.' And then we finally did, and that was the first cheer from the audience. But there's also the fact that I sang the piss out of it, and Neil and I shredded the end of it. We had a nifty ending that we'd never quite made before. We shredded it."

Stills prefers to make light of the tour's politics, even though he continues to support Democratic campaigns offstage. "We played for two bloody hours. I thought it was great and cathartic because we got all the dated, boring-assed fucking protest music out of our systems. After that it was like, 'Great, now can I play some blues, please?' With all respect to Neil, I'm not critiquing as much as saying what I felt. Although I guess I'm taking my life in my hands admitting everything to a British journalist."

This, remember, is what they sound like when they're getting on. But Mike Cerre believes the spirit of fraternity is genuine and heartfelt.

"Neil was leading the way, and they bought into it and were as glad that it happened as anybody else. David sums it up towards the end of the film, when he says, 'It got to the point where we believed in ourselves again.' That was a legitimate expression of how much this was changing them."

For all the sparring, however, there is a strong sense that these four men have gone beyond the age when they can sustain ancient hostilities. Young, having suffered that aneurysm, says his outlook on life was affected in the sense that, "I just think I became more thankful." But he hasn't slowed up: as well as his recent series of brilliant live show drawing from the dark corners of his career, he's also just announced his groundbreaking 10-disc Blu-ray collection of archive material, spanning 1963–1972, scheduled for release later this year [*in June 2009*].

> "When I came back to my hotel there would be guards on my room"
> **NEIL YOUNG**

There's a sense in *CSNY/Déjà Vu* of a redemptive search, these people trying to get right what in the past, because of the drugs, the pathological rivalries, they did wrong. Forty years after Woodstock, do CSNY still think music can change the world in the way they did, so idealistically, back then?

"I think, looking back," says Graham Nash, "we were naive. We did think we could change the world. We all expected the Vietnam War to end when the American people said it should end, and it didn't end until almost 10 years later. But there was a tremendous feeling then of possibility, of openness, of 'Yes, we can make our music, we can go into the studio, we can make records, we can sell records, we can go and do for people what it is that we have trained all our lives to do. Wake up in the morning, take your first breath, get on with life, express yourself, tell people how you feel, get on with it.'

"I think we misinterpreted the amount of energy it would take to move this planet. Societal movements are very incremental. It's very rare that a society moves in any giant way immediately.

"It takes a lot of energy to move people, to educate people, and to make people aware of what's going on around them and hope they will change their individual lives to affect the world a better way."

How did he think people would react to four balding millionaires telling the world what to do?

"We're not telling the world what to do," he bristles, momentarily. "And we're not balding," he laughs. "It's so funny what people say about us. We're not trying to control the world. We're not trying to tell the world what to do. All we're saying is, 'Hey, this fucking president is killing us. This fucker is driving the country into insanity. This fucker is responsible for America being the most hated country in the world right now.' That's what we're saying. All I'm saying is: 'This is what I think about this idiot. What do you think?'"

"It's a different world now than it was in the 1960s," Neil Young adds ruefully. "And I'm a different person than I was in the 1960s. I have more experience. I am not under any misconception that my next record is going to change the world.

"I'm a realist. So I just say what I feel, and that's where the *Living With War* record came from. Those are my real feelings. That's how I feel. So whether it's 2008 or 1968 or 1919, it doesn't matter to me.

"This is it. I'm still standing. I'm strong. I know my strengths, what I can do and what I can't do. I just go forward." ●

Stills, Nash, Crosby and Young at the premiere of *CSNY/Deja Vu*, Utah, January 25, 2008

GEORGE PIMENTEL/WIREIMAGE

CROSBY, STILLS & NASH

Crosby, Stills and Nash solo in the 2000s

RELEASED 2001-2018

No encore? CSN turn out for Neil in the 2000s, but otherwise its members productively follow their paths alone.

BY GRAEME THOMSON

THE looming question facing David Crosby, Stephen Stills and Graham Nash as they pushed on through the new millennium, both together and alone, was neatly articulated by Nash on "Encore", the closing track on his 2016 solo album, *This Path Tonight*. "*What are you gonna do when the last show is over*," he sings with that distinctive inflection, Salford by way of Sunset Strip. "*What're you gonna do when you can't touch base...?*"

Between 2000 and the group's ill-tempered dissolution at the end of 2015, Crosby, Stills & Nash increasingly struggled to touch base. There were several tours, including one memorable outing with Young, as well as boxsets, archival releases and live albums, but, tellingly, the sole attempt to make a new record – of covers, rather than originals – sank in a sea of bad vibes. A clear-eyed reckoning of their final 15 years would conclude that it made little imprint on their collective legacy.

Yet as the centre failed to hold, each of the three core members succeeded in picking up the threads of their becalmed and sometimes long dormant solo careers. For Crosby in particular, the noughties and beyond have proved conducive to an impressive late blossoming. Like Johnny Cash and Leonard Cohen – you might also throw in Rembrandt and Matisse; Crosby probably would – he has found old age a creative spur. Twenty years elapsed between his third solo LP, *Thousand Roads*, and the fourth, 2014's *Croz*. Since then, three more have arrived with almost indecent haste. As well as a blizzard of new songs, he has toured frequently; released a panoramic career overview, *Voyage*; was the subject of Cameron Crowe's recent documentary, *Remember My Name*; and cultivated a parallel career as a combative Twitter oracle. Crosby is as *here* as he has ever been.

His recent work has been shaped by two distinct collaborations, one with Snarky Puppy's Michael League, and the other with Crosby's son James Raymond, who alongside Jeff Pevar joined him in his first millennial recording, the solid second CPR album, *Just Like Gravity* from 2001, and has been a mainstay ever since.

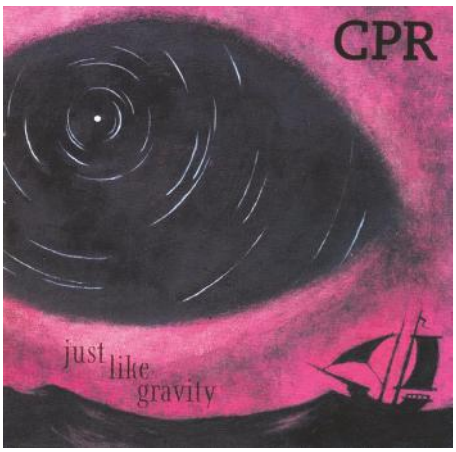
The two men offer Crosby a markedly different set of tools. The music Crosby makes with Raymond tends to be a smooth, streamlined affair. *Croz* was recorded at Raymond's home studio, where he co-wrote half the songs with his father and contributed a couple more by himself. The results are a prescient reminder of Crosby's ability to bring sublime twists to melodies and words, but the overall effect is one of slightly anodyne proficiency, the final product polished to a proud sheen, aided by guest spots from Mark Knopfler and Wynton Marsalis.

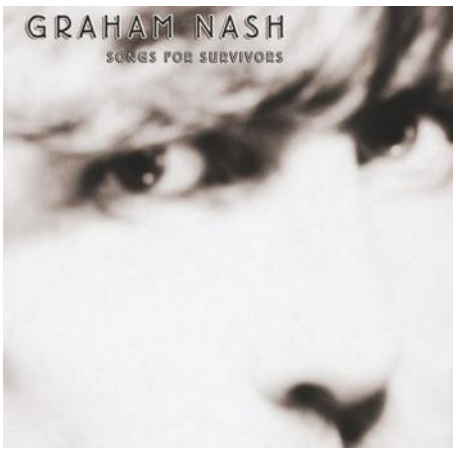
When Raymond returned to the helm in 2017 as co-writer and producer on *Sky Trails*, he and Crosby allowed some cooler, freer air to blow through their songs. Among the 10 tracks is a lovely cover of Joni Mitchell's "Amelia", and with its burbling fretless bass, lush jazz-inflected grooves, fluting saxophones and elegantly fragmented melodies, the entire album suggests a renewed affiliation with the mid-'70s output of one of Crosby's oldest friends. "Curved Air" is a bustling flamenco with Spanish guitar, Moorish handclaps and galloping fretless bass. On "Here It's Almost Sunset", bassist Mai Agan and saxophonist Steve Tavaglione summon up at least a shadow of the spirit of Jaco Pastorius and Wayne Shorter on, say, Mitchell's "Jericho". Michael MacDonald earns a co-writing credit on "Before Tomorrow Falls On Love", a classy 3am piano ballad, but lest it all becomes too relaxed, Crosby unloads his significant disgust at the current state of America on the seven-minute "Capitol". Yes, the odd lyric comes perilously close to Burning Man blather, and at times the production is overly slick, but at its best *Sky Trails* is a strong, sinuous work.

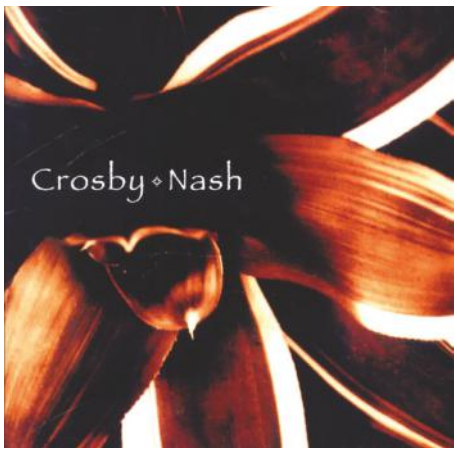
In contrast to the albums Crosby made in tandem with Raymond are the two records he recorded with League and vocalists/multi-instrumentalists Becca Stevens and Michelle Willis, a quartet he calls The Lighthouse Band. ➤

CRITICS' VERDICTS

JUST LIKE GRAVITY
"Pevar's and Raymond's songs are workaday, but Cros is still in great voice, and they recreate classic CSN harmonies on 'Gone Forever', while on the title track and 'Climber' he contributes two songs that suprass anything he came up with for last years' disappointing CSNY reunion."
Nigel Williamson, Uncut, September 2001

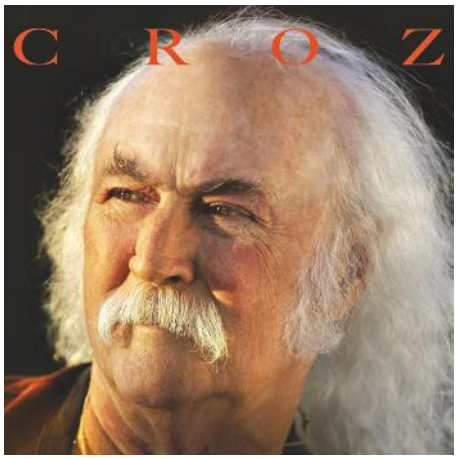

CPR
just like gravity

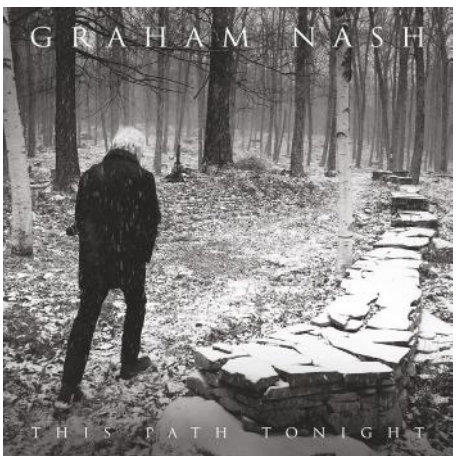

GRAHAM NASH
SONGS FOR SURVIVORS

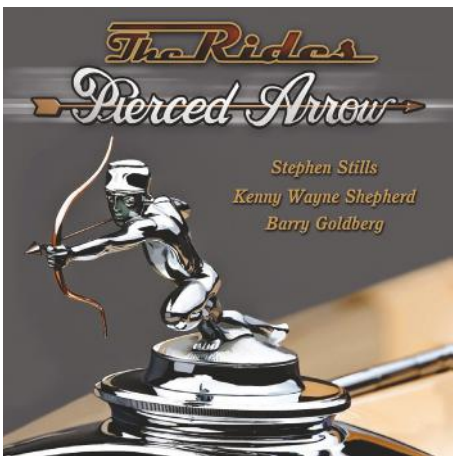

Crosby • Nash

Stephen Stills
MAN ALIVE!

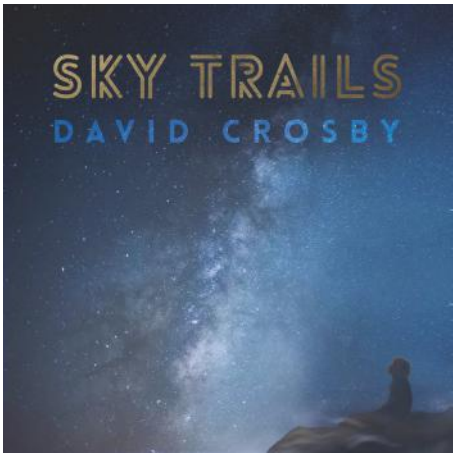
The Rides
Can't Get Enough
Stephen Stills Kenny Wayne Shepherd Barry Goldberg


C R O Z


GRAHAM NASH
THIS PATH TONIGHT

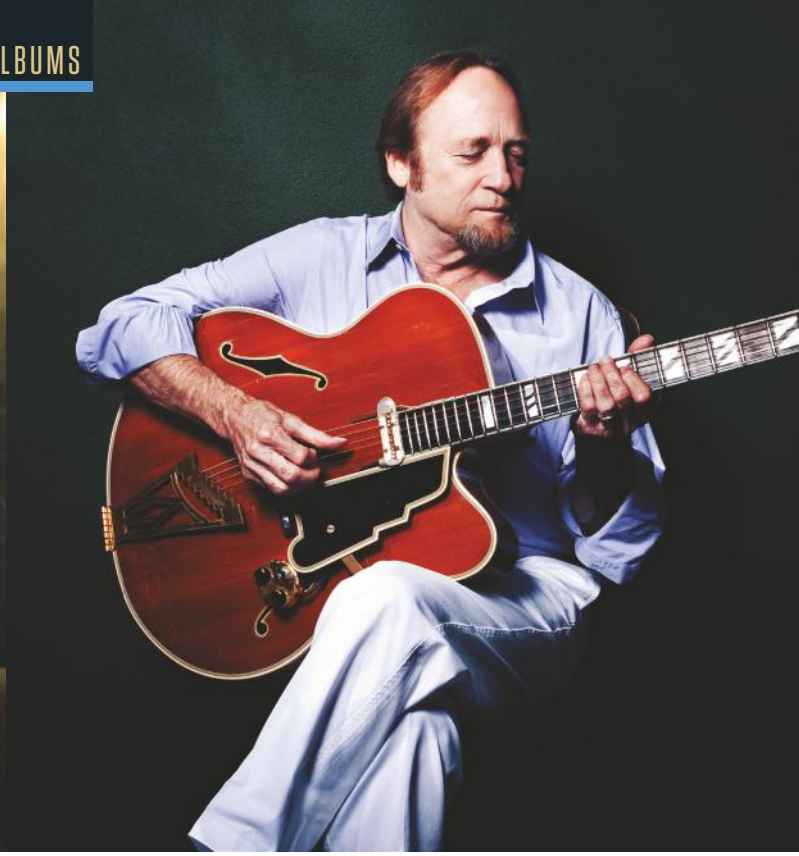

The Rides
Pierced Arrow
Stephen Stills
Kenny Wayne Shepherd
Barry Goldberg

LIGHTHOUSE
David Crosby


SKY TRAILS
DAVID CROSBY

Stills & Collins
- EVERYBODY KNOWS -

DAVID CROSBY
BECCA STEVENS MICHELLE WILLIS MICHAEL LEAGUE
HERE IF YOU LISTEN



Picking up the threads of becalmed and sometimes long dormant careers: Crosby, Stills and Nash in the 21st century

They first united in 2016 on *Lighthouse*, a thoughtful and intensely beautiful record, as light and airy in its musical choices as it is weighty in its cosmic musings. Here, voice and acoustic guitar are the load-bearing beams, the former frequently layered in a stack of glorious harmonies, the latter deploying Crosby's trademark exotic tunings to take the melodies on unexpected detours. Around these, League adds painterly production touches: slithers of bass, washes of organ, solid piano chords. Lit up with a kind of calm intensity, *Lighthouse* is a late career highlight.

Two years later, on *Here If We Listen*, the quartet of Crosby, League, Stevens and Willis function as a genuine band, writing the bulk of the tracks together, and displaying an increasingly telepathic intuition. For all the honest fare of his work with Raymond, you sense that this music is where Crosby's heart truly lies. "If leaving a group like Crosby, Stills & Nash was like jumping off a cliff, then finding the Lighthouse Band was like growing wings halfway down," he said in 2018. And it's true; on these records he frequently soars.

Crosby's *Lighthouse* is thoughtful and intensely beautiful

If Crosby takes gold in the CSN solo stakes, his cohorts have hardly been idle. Many years in gestation, Stills' *Man Alive!*, from 2005, is partially pieced together from recordings stretching back to the mid-'70s, some parts retained and other parts replaced. If the working methods suggested a muse stuck on cruise control, the results are defiantly vibrant. He kicks up real heat with Young on the rollicking "Round The Bend", while Herbie Hancock adds deft touches to the 11-minute, Latin-infused "Spanish Suite".

The bluesy "Piece Of Me", meanwhile, points towards the thrust of Stills' next project. In the past decade he has made two good-rocking blues albums – *Can't Get Enough* (2013) and *Pierced Arrow* (2016) – with The Rides, the superior bar-band he formed with Kenny Wayne Shepherd and Barry Goldberg.

In between he released *Carry On*, a four-disc retrospective taking in every corner of his career. Although his voice is a shadow of what it once was, Stills has more recently enjoyed a

TRACK MARKS

CPR
JUST LIKE GRAVITY
GOLD CIRCLE, 2001
★★★
Produced by: David Crosby, James Raymond, Jeff Pevar, Dan Garcia
Recorded: Groove Masters, LA; Santa Barbara Sound Design
Highest chart position: UK – ; US –

GRAHAM NASH
SONGS FOR SURVIVORS
ARTEMIS, 2002
★★★
Produced by: Russ Kunkel, Nathaniel Kunkel, Graham Nash
Recorded: O'Henry Sound Studios, LA
Highest chart position: UK – ; US –

DAVID CROSBY & GRAHAM NASH
CROSBY & NASH
SANCTUARY, 2004
★★
Produced by: David Crosby, Graham Nash, Stephen Barncard
Recorded: CenterStaging; Kazoo; Conway Studios; O'Henry Sound Studios (all Los Angeles)
Highest chart position: UK 78; US 142

STEPHEN STILLS
MAN ALIVE!
TITAN PYRAMID, 2005
★★★
Produced by: Stephen Stills, Joe Vitale
Recorded:: n/a
Highest chart position: UK 78; US 142

THE RIDES
CAN'T GET ENOUGH
429 RECORDS, 2013
★★★
Produced by: Jerry Harrison
Recorded: EastWest Studios, Hollywood
Highest chart position: UK 87; US 39

DAVID CROSBY
CROZ BLUE CASTLE, 2014
★★★
Produced by: David Crosby, James Raymond, David Garcia
Recorded: The Bamboo Room, Cincinnati; Groove Masters, LA; Radio Hill Recorders, LA; The Rumor Mill, NYC; Jazz At Lincoln Center, NYC
Highest chart position: UK – ; US 36

GRAHAM NASH
THIS PATH TONIGHT
BLUE CASTLE, 2016
★★★★
Produced by: Shane Fontayne
Recorded: The Village, Los Angeles; Mile End Studios, CA
Highest chart position: UK 43; US 91

THE RIDES
PIERCED ARROW
PROVOGUE, 2016
★★★
Produced by: Stephen Stills, Barry Goldberg, Kenny Wayne Shepherd, Kevin McCormick
Recorded: EastWest Studios, Hollywood, CA
Highest chart position: UK – ; US 152

DAVID CROSBY
LIGHTHOUSE
GROUNDUP MUSIC, 2016
★★★★
Produced by: Michael League
Recorded: Groove Masters, LA
Highest chart position: UK – ; US 117

DAVID CROSBY
SKY TRAILS BMG, 2017
★★★
Produced by: James Raymond
Recorded: James Raymond's home studio; Groove Masters, Los Angeles
Highest chart position: UK – ; US –

STEPHEN STILLS & JUDY COLLINS
EVERYBODY KNOWS
WILDFLOWER RECORDS/ CLEOPATRA, 2017
★★★★
Produced by: Stephen Stills, Collins, Alan Silverman, Marvin Etzioni
Recorded: Westlake Studios; Stray Gator Sound, CA
Highest chart position: UK – ; US 45

DAVID CROSBY
HERE IF YOU LISTEN
BMG MUSIC, 2018
★★★★
Produced by: Michael League with David Crosby, Becca Stevens, Michelle Willis, Fab Dupont
Recorded: Atlantic Sound, Brooklyn; Flux Studios, NYC
Charts: UK – ; US –

ANNA WEBBER/ELEANORSTILLS

fruitful reunion with Judy Collins, for whom he wrote "Suite: Judy Blue Eyes" in 1969. Almost 50 years after they ceased to be romantically involved, the pair cooked up *Everybody Knows*, an elegant mix of originals and classic covers by the likes of Sandy Denny, Leonard Cohen and Tim Hardin. An unexpectedly easeful joy of a record, it gained additional layers of verve and poignancy when they took it on the road, and has given Nash fresh impetus late in his career.

Nash appears similarly revived. When he released his fifth solo album, *Songs For Survivors*, in 2002, it felt a little as though – as per the album title – simply sticking around was achievement enough. A pleasant, low-key collection of plainly arranged acoustic-based songs, it found him in fine voice but struggling for something substantial to say.

It took a decade and more for Nash to experience a truly urgent compulsion to create, but he kept active in the intervening period. Indeed, he and Crosby came together in 2004 on *Crosby & Nash*, a belated follow-up to their last duo album, *Whistling Down The Wire*, from 1976. A double set of almost fatally mellow AOR, mixing a handful of originals with copious covers, it meanders down familiar avenues with the duo's harmonic splendour intact, with only "Puppeteer" and "They Want It All" really leaving a mark on the rather bland furnishings.

While indulging his interest in art and photography, Nash also took on the role of archivist. As well as overseeing CSN's *Demos* compilation in 2009, he curated a retrospective boxset of his own oeuvre, *Reflections*, followed a decade later by the rarities collection *Over The Years*. It was a more introspective and substantial delve into the past, however, which shook up his creativity. The writing of his 2013 memoir, *Wild Tales*, instigated a period of intensely personal reassessment, which not only ricocheted through his personal life, but in 2016 led directly to the writing and recording of *This Path Tonight*.

At 74, Nash was inspired by what he describes as "dramatic and traumatic changes" in his domestic arrangements – notably the end of his 38-year marriage. He wrote 20 songs in a month with sometime CSN guitarist Shane Fontayne and recorded the results in a little over a week. Musically, the mood is warm and intimate, the styles ranging from hushed acoustic balladry to driving electric rock. Lyrically, the tracks cluster around themes of regret, separation, new love and an enveloping awareness of mortality.

The title track establishes the questioning tone, Nash hovering at the crossroads and wondering, "*Where are we going?*" On the twilit ruminations of "Myself At Last", he asks, "*Is my future just my past?*" Bittersweet nostalgia is a recurring theme. The first verse of "Golden Days" gazes back fondly to The Hollies – "*We sang with all our hearts and everything we had*" – before taking on the somewhat more turbulent narrative of CSNY: "*What happened to all you need is love?*" Nash wonders, as well he might.

By now, fraternal love among the band proved in short supply. As the individual members plotted their singular paths, the notion of CSN, the mother band, as an ongoing creative entity ebbed away, until finally it ceased to exist at all, killed off not by age or musical differences, but through the rapidly escalating toxification of an always-combustible blend of relationships.

It was, perhaps, for the best. CSN had started the century intact but somewhat aimless. As old firebrands, they were always at their most engaged in the service of a noble cause, and duly found one in the US government's continued insistence on deploying its firepower in the Middle East. The conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq had inspired Young to write, record and release *Living With War* within a matter of weeks, an unscheduled burst of activity that put paid to a mooted CSN&Y reunion. Instead, his muckers joined him on the *Living With War* tour, performing band and solo cuts, old and new, with freshly minted protests such as "Let's Impeach The President" finding their historical counterweight in the likes of "Ohio" and "Find The Cost Of Freedom".

As an affirmation of core values, mostly paraded in front of boomer crowds of pre-converted partisans, it seemed a noteworthy moment, albeit one which failed to spawn a more creatively balanced reunion – or, indeed, a new record. Both CSN and Young appeared separately at Glastonbury in 2009 but did not unite on stage. An acoustic set at Young's annual Bridge Benefit charity concert in October 2013 proved the final sighting of the band's four-piece iteration.

Still, the trio continued to tour enthusiastically. Commenting on the live album *CSN 2012*, Nash rhapsodised to *Music Radar* that "there's a certain kind of spark between the three of us, and it's really hot right now". Attempts to bring that spark into the studio faltered, however. In 2012, they embarked upon a covers album at Shangri La in Malibu, produced by Rick Rubin, to be titled 'Songs We Wish We'd Written'. The sessions fell apart seven songs in, precipitated by a breakdown in relations between band, Crosby in particular, and producer, who they felt was too overbearing. "Rick is a brilliant man, but we just rubbed each other the wrong way," Nash said. "We felt like we had this guy who was telling us what to do all the time. I mean, who the fuck is Rick Rubin to tell Crosby, Stills & Nash what to do? You can't."

The songs attempted included The Rolling Stones' "Ruby Tuesday", The Who's "Behind Blue Eyes" and The Beatles' "Blackbird" and "Across The Universe". Further efforts to re-record them without Rubin apparently came to naught, before the final parting of the ways late in 2015, when Crosby's seemingly inexhaustible gift for unleashing verbal firestorms created a series of burning bridges – infuriating and alienating first Young, then Nash, with unguarded opinions about their private lives.

And that, it seems certain, will be that. Déjà vu, all over again. "There will never be another Crosby, Stills & Nash record or show," says Nash. One of the most venerable old oaks in the forest has finally fallen, yet the branches, somehow, continue to thrive. ●

AMY GRANTHAM

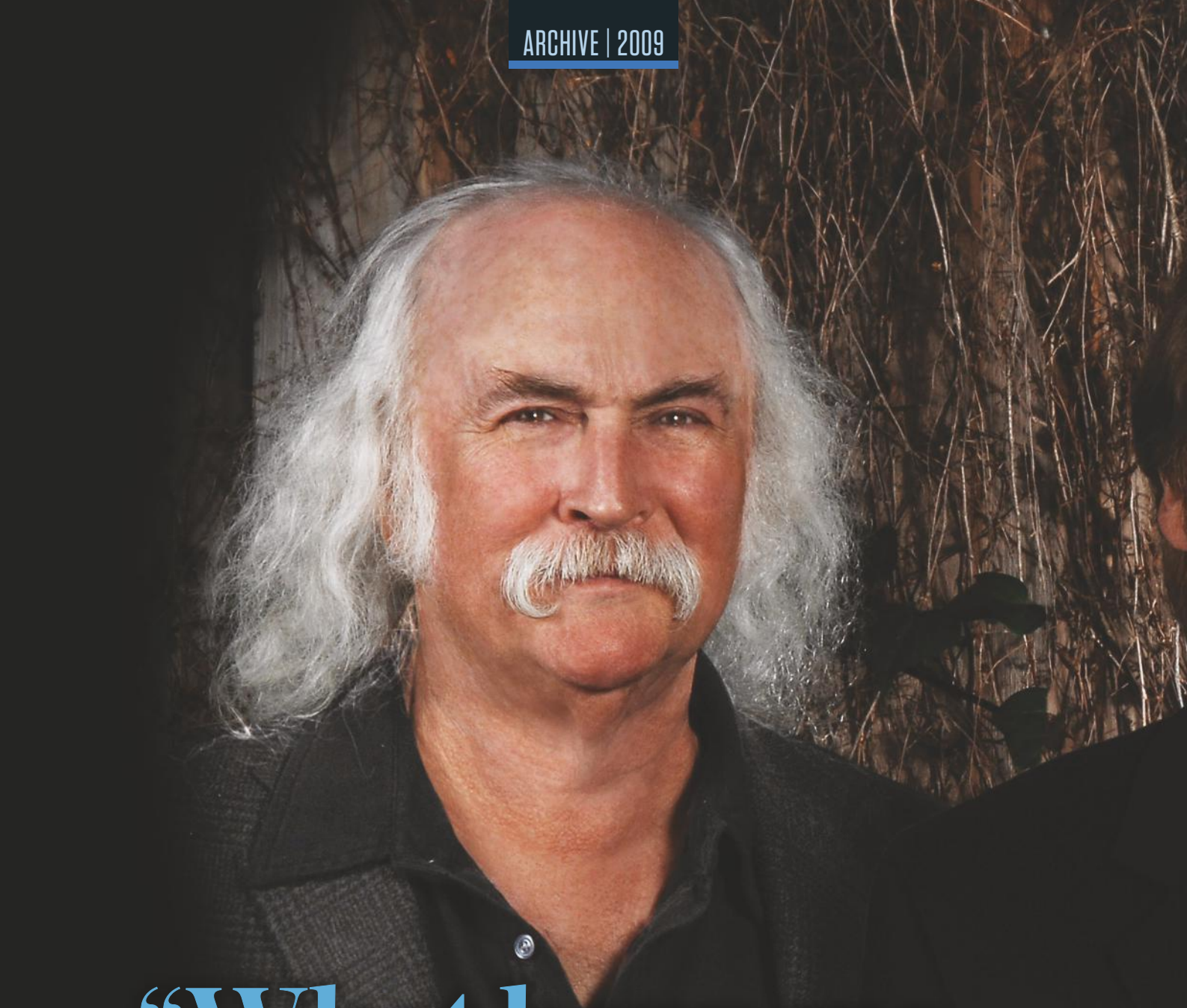
CRITICS' VERDICTS

THIS PATH TONIGHT
"Even when the prevailing mood of introspective understatement threatens to sink into the maudlin or overwrought, there's an urgency about *This Path Tonight* that keeps things buoyant." **Graeme Thomson, Uncut, May 2016**

PIERCED ARROW
"There's some fine original songwriting, particularly from Stills, whose 'Virtual World' is a fluid Springfield-style ballad." **Nigel Williamson, Uncut, July 2016**

HERE IF YOU LISTEN
"There are myriad subtleties in songs like 'I Am No Artist' and 'Vagrants Of Venice', while a stirring new 'Woodstock' and the improvised scatting of '1967' provide a through-line to the majesty of Crosby's earlier days." **Rob Hughes, Uncut, December 2018**

Stills with Barry Goldberg (centre) and Kenny Wayne Shepherd in The Rides in 2013



"What happens is out of our control"

2009. CROSBY is broke. STILLS is hard of hearing. But NASH? He remains optimistic. With their *Demos* album occasioning a tour, and a new covers album with Rick Rubin in the works, CSN seem poised to be a potent force again. "Our goal is to make a great album," Rubin tells David Cavanagh, "and it won't be done until we all love it."

ELDESTEWART

Again there were three: Crosby, Stills and Nash in 2009

UNCUT JULY 2009

WE'RE at the Staples Center in LA for the 53rd Grammy Awards. The year is 2011, and all eyes are on a trio of legendary harmony singers with a combined age of 204. Crosby, Stills & Nash's acclaimed *Covers* LP – with its stripped-down Rick Rubin production and its Proustian pang of Woodstock nostalgia – has turned the old campaigners into "the 69-year-old comeback kids" (*Newsweek*) who are "hipper than Burial" (*Time*).

A standing ovation greets the announcement that they've won Album Of The Year. David Crosby, snowy-haired and still strikingly thin after his dramatic weight loss in 2008, is first to the mic, but he hangs back. It's accepted procedure that Graham Nash makes the speeches. Nash is the firm handshake, the mission statement, the man for the mot juste. Sure enough, he opens with a nice line: "Whether you're as old as we are, or as young as you've made us feel, the more harmony in the world, the better."

And then there's the third man, the one with hearing aids in both ears. Stephen Stills is flashing back to CSN's first Grammy, in 1970, for Best New Artist. Their debut album, *Crosby, Stills & Nash*, was the toast of America; a recognisably important event in rock; the moment in the culture when the Laurel Canyon generation seized the baton. To Stills' everlasting dismay, Crosby and Nash refused to attend the Grammys ceremony. "I said, 'We should go!' But my partners were too cool," Stills growls sarcastically to *Uncut*. "This was their anti-establishment gesture. Bollocks! And that was the beginning of the problems, actually. Fame is a subtle, dangerous, seductive, narcissistic thing. It gets into your skin and it changes you"

And even after 40 years, the scars itch.

GRAHAM NASH is sitting in the kitchen of his LA home. In about an hour's time, Crosby and Stills will arrive for a rehearsal. The "covers" album that CSN are making with Rick Rubin is still in its infant stages – they're trying out prospective songs, four or five a day, with no definitive tracklisting as yet – but it's clear that the project (and Rubin himself) excites Nash a great deal. He senses it could be a major album.

"Why would we not shoot for that?" he asks. "We don't want to fuck around. I'm 67 years old, man, and as a band we're in our 40th year. Rick's got a vision, and we've glimpsed his vision, and we're going to go as far as we can towards that dream. Rick recognises something in us that we may have forgotten – which is how good we are when we're good."

> "We may have forgotten... how good we are"
> **GRAHAM NASH**

Already, without hearing a note, it's safe to assume the album will probably be the polar opposite of CSN's most recent releases as a trio, the horribly slick *Live It Up* (1990) and the not-terribly-memorable *After The Storm* (1994).

"We're taking CSN's vocal blend," Nash goes on, "and we're applying it to songs by other people. So we'll do a Joni song, a Dylan song, a James Taylor song. We're taking it back to the bare bones. The arrangements are in the style of 'Helplessly Hoping' and 'You Don't Have To Cry' [*from the 1969 debut*], with a strong acoustic guitar groove from Stephen."

Given Rubin's track record (Johnny Cash, Neil Diamond, Metallica), it's tempting to race to the nearest bookies right now and put one's shirt on a CSN career-revitalising sensation. With those voices, Rubin's studio skills and the right material, how can they fail? It's possible, according to Nash, that the album will grow into a multi-part series like the historic Johnny Cash recordings (1994–2006). However, Rubin, a long-time CSN admirer, insists that comparisons with Cash are premature.

"Our goal is to make a great album, and it won't be done until we all love it. What happens after that is out of our control," he tells *Uncut*.

The Rubin project is merely one reason why Graham Nash is an optimistic man these days. Sounding 10 years younger than his age, with Mancunian vowels still prominent in his sun-kissed accent, Nash comes across as a musician with an agile mind and a generous perspective. Whether he is doffing his cap to Fleet Foxes

At the Songwriters Hall Of Fame induction ceremony, New York, June 18, 2009

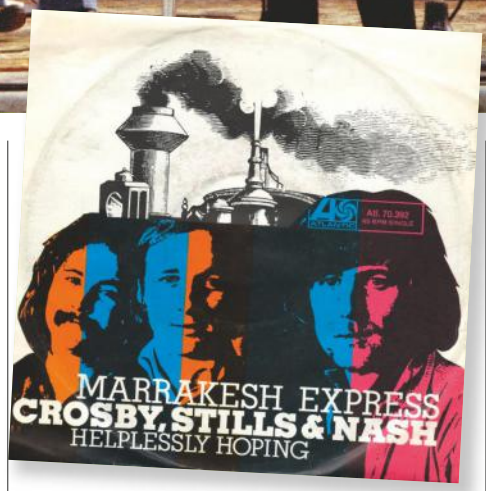
LARRY BUSACCA/GETTY IMAGES FOR SONGWRITERS HALL OF FAME

Crosby, Stills and Nash (Young present but not pictured) with John Sebastian and Joni Mitchell at Big Sur Folk Festival, CA, September 1969

("I like them... great energy!"), or reminiscing about Crosby in his mid-'60s green-caped pomp ("He had a reputation for cantankerousness, but I loved him from the very beginning"), or recalling Stills' prodigious blooming as a songwriter in 1968 ("He had an epiphany, is all I can call it. To write those 19 songs in a four-month period is insane"), Nash is a man who appears to be free of demons, agendas or regrets. He's the only member of CSN not to suffer from health problems or financial worries, and in addition to his hands-on involvement in their archive – *Demos*, a collection of rare 1968–'71 versions of classic CSN songs together and alone, is released this month – he remains their most upbeat spokesman and a crucial mediator in the tense relationship between Crosby and Stills. It wouldn't be stretching a point to describe Graham Nash as the leader of CSN in the 21st century.

"I'm not usually a guy who looks back," he admits. "I'm much more interested in the song I'm writing now, or the show I'm doing tomorrow. But when I put out my boxset [*Reflections*] in February, I had to look at my life. I had to think about who Graham Nash was. It was very interesting to realise what a phenomenally lucky life I've led. To have been on the same planet and on the same scene – at the same time! – as The Beatles, Joni, Bob Dylan, Jimi Hendrix... Get outta here!"

Nash's life hinged on a moment of such serendipity, you could argue, when Crosby came breezing into the room in '66, arrogantly telling journalists to fuck off at a Hollies press conference, and warmly encouraging Nash's writing at a time when the Manchester popsters were turning his songs down flat.



That was also the year Nash took the train to Casablanca, and saw Marrakesh, accompanied by his first wife, Rose, and her best friend. This was not an exciting, Crosby-style ménage à trois, Nash stresses; it was northern, domestic, "totally boring", and he longed to be liberated. Nash's "Lady Of The Island" (for Joni Mitchell) may sound like the epitome of tranquil California, but he wrote it in Leeds. Finally, in '68, Crosby beckoned him across the Atlantic and Nash was reborn in the sun. Today he says simply, "Crosby saved my life."

And Stills? *Demos* revisits some of CSN's earliest days, when, if they had a captain, it was certainly Stills. A fiery, feisty multi-instrumentalist who played 80 per cent of the debut album on his own (Nash: "Was he leading the charge? Abso-fucking-lutely"), Stills has rivalled Crosby for narcotic squandermania and ghoulish stories over the years, yet is said to be a reserved, sensitive, misunderstood introvert in person. Nash leaves me with a tantalising aperçu of the man I'll be speaking to tomorrow night.

"I don't know what happened to him in his childhood, but Stephen is very fragile. Always has been. Stephen, when I first met him, had an insane desire for music. It got him away from his crazy family, it got him out of that military school vibe, with his dad being in the CIA and having to change countries every 10 minutes. When Stephen discovered rock'n'roll, he ran like fuck for the door."

STEPHEN Stills in 2009 is profoundly affected by tinnitus. CSN may be an acoustic folk-pop group, but decades of electric rock have finally caught up with the 64-year-old Stills. He wears hearing aids, talks disarmingly about being "completely deaf", and asks for questions to be repeated. The contrast with the sprightly Nash could hardly be greater. CSN's youngest member, Stills sounds by far the oldest, with a chewy growl like a late-period Spencer Tracy, and a semi-seriously irascible tone that veers off into Anglicisms – "bugger", "daft", "what a berk" – acquired during the '70s when he was resident in England.

Stills is shocked to hear that Nash has referred to his late father as a CIA man. It transpires that there is no proof of this; even the family themselves are not sure. "He was an engineer," says Stills. "He built things in Latin America, and we went along with him. We don't know anything else for a fact. God almighty! I've never heard it expressed with [*Nash's*] degree of specificity before! I couldn't ➤

ROBERT ALTMAN/MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES

One voice: Crosby, Stills & Nash at Heineken Music Hall, Amsterdam, July 6, 2009

even tell you what Graham's dad did for a living."

Whatever his father's occupation, though, Stills grew into a confused, complicated young man.

"I put on a great front, ha ha, but I was a mass of neurological contradictions. Let's leave it at that."

Stills underwent prostate cancer surgery in early 2008. Now clear, yet cautious ("The saying is, 'He's been fixed but he still has the urge'"), Stills makes a point of intervening if he hears of others who are dithering about treatment, or have a fear of diagnosis. He's been known to cold-call total strangers – friends of friends – and order them to see a doctor immediately.

A cocaine-hooked hellraiser in the past, Stills' message to us now is unequivocal: act today to save your life. He recommends an annual physical, increasing to biannual for the over-fifties. If we can make a dentist's appointment while we're at it (which he notoriously didn't), even better. "Go to the doctor, you berk, and get check-ups regularly," he counsels. "Anyone who's suffered from a life-threatening malady, and has dodged the bullet like me, has a responsibility to tell others. And now I've got beautiful children and a lovely wife, and the rest of it sorts itself out."

While Rick Rubin is adamant that Stills' hearing deficiency "has not been an issue" in rehearsals for the new LP, Stills concedes that it can be extremely frustrating. He sometimes can't hear his guitar, and he believes that science in the field of hearing aids still has far to go. "People get mad at you when you keep saying, 'Pardon? Excuse me?' Graham, I must say, has been an absolute dear. If we're doing a press interview, and I've missed the question, Graham will turn to me, look straight into my eyes and repeat it. That tells you what kind of a man Graham is. The tone of his voice, and his English accent, make it easy to understand him. Actually, I can understand Englishmen a lot better than Americans, unless they use slang. Stoners and mumblers? Forget it!"

Stills is at a stage in his life when songwriting no longer comes easy, and when retirement seems an attractive proposition. There are rumours that this CSN tour may be their last (which they will neither confirm nor deny), and Stills has the philosophical view of a man who proved his point, creatively speaking, a long time ago. All the same, a faint hope seems to be harboured that he could yet dazzle again – that he could "get the songwriting back into gear" and reconnect with the Stills of old. He's had a spotty, disappointing career since he stood on the verge of US rock'n'roll domination in 1972. And the fact that his Buffalo Springfield comrade Neil Young ascended the throne instead of him did not escape his notice.

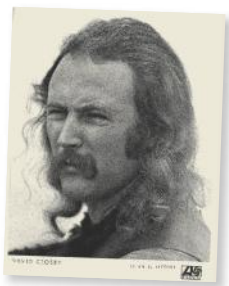
> "I had a 30-inch waist and nothing hurt. I could go for days"
> **STEPHEN STILLS**

"It's not that I can't still do it," Stills reasons. "It's just that back then I had a 30-inch waist and nothing hurt. I could go for days. When I look in the mirror now, I see a bit around the eyes... the lumps and bumps. But that guy's still in there. Oh, I don't know. Maybe somebody on the political scene will do something really annoying and I'll write a song about it.

"I mean, you raise an interesting point," he goes on. "There's possibly more luck to it than you're suggesting, but yes, I was poised to be The Voice, the Big American Rocker. Who knew that Neil would step in there, and keep coming back? He makes this whole succession of really bad albums, and then up pops up a good one and suddenly he's pre-eminent again. I'm sort of the same way. I may pop up again and be The Really Interesting Old Guy. But if I could go back and change one thing, I'd slow down, be more observant. And do something about my lack of social confidence."

If the Rubin album does become a hit, as many would anticipate, Stills will feel more grateful than vindicated. He dislikes the word "important" being attached to popular culture, except for the occasional political movie or documentary, but he respects the "formidable" Rubin, envies him his "bat-like" hearing, and is aware that he can revive careers at a stroke.

"Yes, I would be pleasantly surprised, and I would make the most of it. In my sixties, it's a bit of a reach, but let's see. Let's just see. I think it's bad luck to talk about it."



DAVID Crosby, 67, has the light, clear voice of a much younger man. Some of his vocabulary may come from a bygone age ("It will blow your mind," he promises of *Demos*), but his voice does that teenage thing of upwardly inflecting the ends of sentences, a habit Crosby's presumably learned from his 13-year-old son, Django, whom he mentions

PAUL BERGEN/REDFERNS; ROBERT ALTMAN/MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES

several times. Rather than say something hollow about CSN's imminent tour, like some well-practised rocker, Crosby admits he simply dreads missing his family.

In the real world, Crosby would have retired two years ago, having paid sensibly into a private pension plan, saved for a rainy day, and not spent millions of his hard-earned dollars on drugs. But this is not a time for being wise after the event, and Crosby now tours with CSN because he needs the money. He'd love to be able to bring his wife and son on the road with him, but budgets are tight and he can't afford to. Crosby, just like the rest of us, worries about the recession.

"If I had saved up all the money that I blew, yes, I would be thinking about laying back [*retiring*] now," he allows. "Not because I don't love playing music – I do, very much. But going on the road is hard. Long bus rides. Bad food. I've got a lot of things wrong with my body. My health is not good. But you know what really gets me? Those hours alone in the hotel room."

Crosby's recent medical history includes diabetes, hepatitis and a liver transplant. Hit with a few hefty bills in the past year, he has reluctantly placed his beloved yacht, *The Mayan*, on the market. When he finds a buyer, it really will be the end of an era. Crosby purchased rock'n'roll's most famous schooner in 1968, with his severance money from The Byrds, and once sailed it from Mexico to Hawaii. Meanwhile, royalties generated by *Crosby, Stills & Nash* and *Déjà Vu*, while not huge, continue to keep Crosby alive and pay the school fees. "When we were making really large money, I put it all in my body," he laments quietly. "Now I live in a two-bedroom house and drive an old Ford Excursion."

Interviewing Crosby is a poignant affair. Last year he lost 55lb in weight, owing to medication for his various ailments, and it's hard to know whether to offer congratulations or sympathy. It's sad to imagine him channel-hopping morosely in a faceless European hotel, desperately missing his kid, when once he swanned into town like an emperor with a string of adoring girls hanging off him. ("Crosby was something else, man," Graham Nash affirms. "He always had the prettiest women, he always had the best dope, and he was always on his way to a party.")

These days, like Stills, Crosby finds himself admiring Nash – the guy who took precautions – more and more. "He was smart," Crosby chuckles softly. "Graham Nash is, more than anything else, an intelligent man. He has not made a hash of his life, as I did. You'll notice that he never got busted, never got in trouble. He's a wonderfully accomplished and clever guy, and a real gentleman." Crosby also names Mick Jagger and David Gilmour as musicians he regards highly, because they took care of their money.

Whether this proves to be the final CSN tour or not, one wouldn't begrudge the ageing gents a relaxing voyage from state to state, from nation to nation, as they harmonise their way back and forth in time. As well as their illustrious songbook from 1968–69 onwards, they aim to sing half a dozen new tunes from the Rubin album to see how they're received. In Europe, Stills will visit a son in Paris, and looks forward to arriving in London via Eurostar. Nash is travelling by a different route. Crosby will try not to get too melancholy as he watches CNN yet again. Perhaps they'll go out to dinner – or to a museum – in pairs, but seldom do they do so as a trio. As Stills puts it, "At our age, we're not likely to descend on anybody en masse." Crosby and Stills, whose fierce friendship started the ball rolling in the summer of '68, are prone to disputes and squabbles, even now, though they both claim deep respect for the other.

"They're kind of goofy," says Stills, "but they tend to be smart, and a little flustered and shy, and you have to be patient with them. The percentage of truly annoying ones is rather slight."

I think he's talking about CSN's fans, incidentally, but you do sort of wonder. ●

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE COVERS ALBUM?

Covers star: Rick Rubin

STEVE GRANITZ/WIREIMAGE

"When we were working with Rick we wanted to do 'Blackbird' and 'Norwegian Wood', covers of songs we wished *we'd* written," Nash told *Uncut* in 2018. "But Rick said no, that there would only be one Beatles song on the record. So Crosby told him: 'There'll only be one Beatles song on the record if *we* say there's only one fucking Beatles song on the record. Do not tell us what the fuck to do and what to sing!' It was over from that moment. Maybe our career might've taken a different route had it been a successful project. But he didn't handle the situation well."

ALMOST CUT THESE VERSIONS

Crosby, Stills and Nash's track-by-track guide to the 2009 *Demos* album

MARRAKESH EXPRESS

Nash's tribute to a seething Moroccan marketplace. "I went there in '66 and soaked up the scene. It was alive, and so was I, and that's what the song's about."

ALMOST CUT MY HAIR

Crosby's "freak flag" anthem, an emotional high-point of CSNY's *Déjà Vu*. "I started writing it in Beverly Glen and finished it out on Long Island."

YOU DON'T HAVE TO CRY

The start of CSN. Stills and Crosby were singing it together when Nash suddenly added a third harmony. Joni Mitchell's house is traditionally cited, but Stills is certain it happened at Cass Elliot's. "I wouldn't have dared sing a new song in front of Joni."

DÉJÀ VU

Crosby: "There are a couple of times in my life when I've felt that I've lived before. The first time I ever sailed a boat, and the first time I sang harmony, at six years old."

SLEEP SONG

One of many Nash songs rejected by The Hollies. "They didn't like the line "'*I'll take off my clothes and lie by your side*'."

MY LOVE IS A GENTLE THING

Rare Stills tune, later retitled "Love Eyes". "May have been discarded by Manassas. You're certainly challenging the memory."

BE YOURSELF

Nash song co-written with Terry Reid. "Terry was in Peter Jay & The Jaywalkers. Everyone thought he'd have a great future."

MUSIC IS LOVE

Crosby-Nash-Young improvisation on Crosby's solo LP, *If I Could Only Remember My Name*. "I was going to set it aside, because it was so loose. They went, 'No, man, it was fucking great!'"

SINGING CALL

From *Stephen Stills 2*, never intended for CSN. "It's too stark. It needs to be a single voice."

LONG TIME GONE

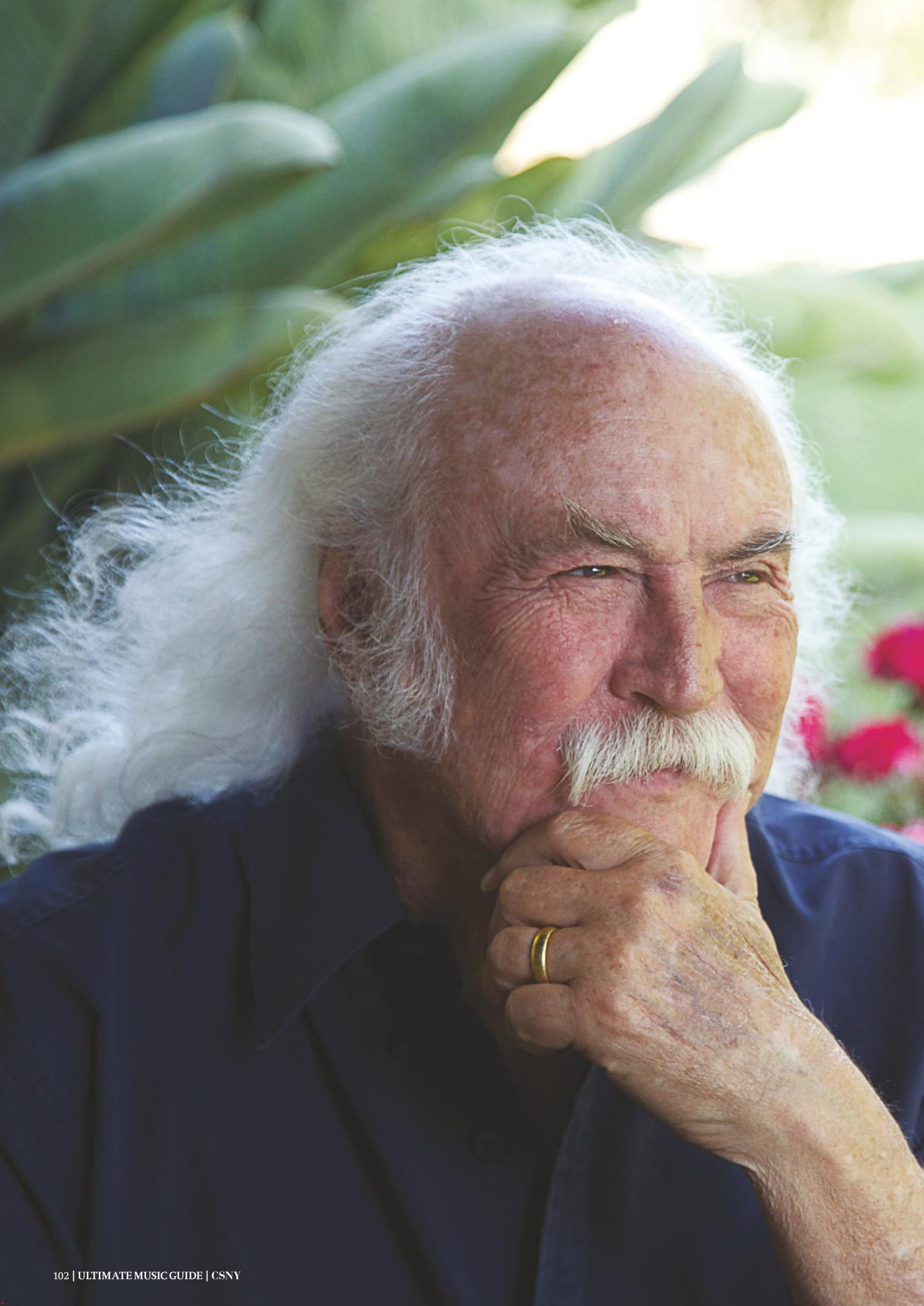
Crosby-Stills demo from June 1968, pre-Nash. Crosby: "I wrote it after Bobby Kennedy got killed. We were all feeling discouraged."

CHICAGO

Nash song chiding CSNY for not playing a benefit for Chicago political activists. "Stephen and Neil had other things planned and couldn't go. I wrote it for all of us."

LOVE THE ONE YOU'RE WITH

Classic Stills track. "Billy Preston used to throw that line over his shoulder, and it stuck. I tried to give him a credit, but he refused."



"I regret the time I wasted being wasted"

Newly inspired, "happy guy" DAVID CROSBY returns. Croz lets his still-freaky flag fly on Donald Trump, his relationship with Graham Nash, and how he now respects his own creativity. "I try not to look backwards," he tells Michael Bonner

"These are very tense times in the United States": David Crosby in 2016

The young David Crosby in 1965, taking over rhythm guitar duties from Gene Clark in The Byrds

MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES

UNCUT OCTOBER 2016

"I'M HAVING a great day, man. I wrote a new song last night. Got it demoed. I'm just a very happy guy." It is shortly after noon in Santa Ynez, California, and David Crosby is in excellent spirits. He has recently recovered from a stomach bug – "I was puking my guts up"; thanks for the visual, Dave! – but evidently this has done little to dampen his mood. Jovial and wryly self-deprecating, Crosby talks enthusiastically about his current, unprecedented creative streak. Since releasing *Croz*, his first solo album in 21 years, in early 2014, he has multiple projects in the works. The first of these is *Lighthouse*, a new LP due in October. Historically, his writing is all about space and melody, qualities that are reassuringly abundant on this latest record. Admittedly, Crosby himself is unsure what accounts for this sudden burst of creativity – "The truth is, I don't fucking know. I wish I did! Usually, when we get to this stage of things, we either get lazy or we frantically try and have another hit, which is not my MO at all. I've never had one!"

Crosby's current collaborators – including his son, James – are the latest in a long line of musical foils stretching back to Roger McGuinn and Chris Hillman in The Byrds and, later, Stephen Stills, Graham Nash and Neil Young. Recently, his relationship with Nash has soured –his former bandmate claimed, "David has ripped the heart out of Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young" – although today Crosby speaks generously about the work they achieved together. He is adamant, too, that he would reunite with CSNY during this critical election year to take a spirit-of-'68, anti-Trump message on the road.

It transpires that Crosby has a lot on his mind at the moment. A long-time supporter of the San Francisco scene, he reveals he missed the Grateful Dead's Fare Thee Well shows last summer – "I was working, but I would have cancelled dates so that I could have gone and sung with them, but they decided they weren't going to invite other people to sit in." Crosby celebrates his 75th birthday on August 14 and he is mindful of 2016's extraordinary death toll, which has claimed several of his friends: "When you get to this stage in life, you lose friends fairly consistently. But I try not to look backwards much. David Bowie would not tell me to miss David Bowie, he would tell me to make some new music." Then there is the nagging question of a Byrds reunion: "I would be working with Chris and Roger right now if I could. That's not Roger's choice – and if he doesn't want to do it, I can't make him do it."

> "I can't just go out and do my hits. That's not OK. Even at this late stage of the game"

Despite these thorny matters, though, it's apparent that Crosby is enjoying a period of extended tranquility in his life. "I'm looking at cows in a pasture," he says, describing the view from his bedroom window. "I'm a country guy or an ocean guy. I exist in cities OK. In New York, I do quite well; I like it in London and in cities in Europe. I don't like LA at all, for any reason. No, I live way out in the country. Around me is open, rolling savannah with oaks and grassland. It's beautiful, very beautiful."

***Lighthouse* is your second album in 2 years – you're on quite a roll at the moment.** It's actually even worse than that. It's three albums! *Croz* was a year and a half ago. *Lighthouse*, that's finished, that was me and Michael League, who's the composer and bandleader for Snarky Puppy. Now I'm just about done with another one with my son James, who produced *Croz*. It'll be a band record mostly, but there's one Joni Mitchell song on there where it's just him on piano and me singing.

Which Joni song? "Amelia". Tasteful dude, me.

What's the appeal of collaboration to you? I like to write with other people because they always think of something that I didn't think of. It's as if you were a painter and you have a palette of colours: if you work with somebody else, you've doubled the palette. I'm not in it for publishing money or credit, I'm in it for making the best music I can possibly make.

Have your writing methods changed much over the years? Yeah, I don't do it stoned!

But surely you wrote some pretty good songs while you were stoned? Totally! All of

On stage with his son James Raymond, 1999

'em, until more recently. I want so badly to write. If the muse is going to stop by, I want to have all the brain cells I can herd into one room there and functioning. I want to have the lights on, the windows open and be paying attention. In my world, in singer-songwriter world, if you don't have a song that you can sit down and play to somebody and make them feel something, you're not there. I can't do anything unless I write songs. I can't make a record, and if I can't make records I don't have new material to go out and play and I can't just go out and do my hits. That's just not OK, that's not good enough. Even at this late stage of the game.

Your songwriting career started to blossom 50 years ago on *Fifth Dimension*, after Gene Clark left The Byrds. Had you been stockpiling songs up until that point? Not really. I was just starting to write. Frankly, I don't think I was as good as Gene. I got better as it went along. God bless Roger, Gene and Chris and the other guys; I did get the chance to push the envelope a little bit.

"Mind Gardens" is pretty out there, isn't it? Yeah! They looked at me pretty funny with that one. "You want to do what?" But I was only just getting born as a songwriter, I don't think I really blossomed until *Crosby, Stills & Nash*.

Was it competitive between you, Stephen and Graham? Sure. Not drastically, but we were young guys with egos and we were songwriters – so of course we were competitive with each other. But the absurd advantage we had is that the three of us write completely differently – and if you add Neil to the mix, that gives you a bunch more colours to paint with. If you stick a song of mine next to a song of Neil's, they're different texturally and ideologically in every way. That makes for good records.

How would it go down? Would you all gather at someone's house, bring your guitars and pitch songs to one another? It wasn't a formalised thing, but yes. As soon as we had a song, we'd run to the other guys and say, "Hey, listen to this!" They were my favourite people to show off for. They knew what I was capable of and they knew that if they thought a song was good, it probably was. We did that for each other and we would pick from the pool of songs that the four of us had, or the three of us had, and figure out what the record would be and what we were going to play live.

What did you make of Miles Davis's cover of "Guinnevere"? At first, I didn't get it. He came up to me in New York and said, "Hey, are you Crosby?" I said, "Yes, sir." He said, "I'm Miles." I said, "I know." He said, "I cut one of your tunes." At which point, I choked on my tongue, completely fell down and my brain ran out of my nose. I said, "Whoa, which one?" He said, "'Guinnevere'." I said, "Holy shit..." He said, "You wanna hear it? Follow me." He and this girl with legs up to her neck got into this Ferrari and drove to a brownstone halfway up Manhattan. I went with them. Miles played it for me, but I didn't get it because there's no recognisable part of "Guinnevere" in it. I was more concerned about my tune than I was in the honour of the fact that he used it as a starting point for one of his records. I was kind of snotty about it. But now, obviously, I am completely fucking thrilled.

You write very jazz, he was jazz... There's more history with Miles than people know. When we tried to get signed to Columbia as The Byrds, they didn't know what to make of us. You've got to understand, the guys running record companies back then were failed shoe salesmen. Absolutely wouldn't know a song if it bit them in the nose. Miles was on Columbia, so they went to him, played him the Byrds demos and said, "What do you think of this?" He said, "Oh, yeah. Sign them." So he was responsible for Columbia signing The Byrds. Nobody knows that. You're welcome.

You wrote "Long Time Gone" the night after Bobby Kennedy's assassination, didn't you? You have to back up a little bit historically. This was an aggregate blow. First they killed Kennedy, then King, then Bobby. It was getting to be ballot by bullet and the heroes that we thought were going to turn things to a better direction were getting shot. We were all Woodstocky, the hippie generation, thinking we could stop the Vietnam War and achieve Civil Rights. Shooting King and the two Kennedys was like a punch in the face.

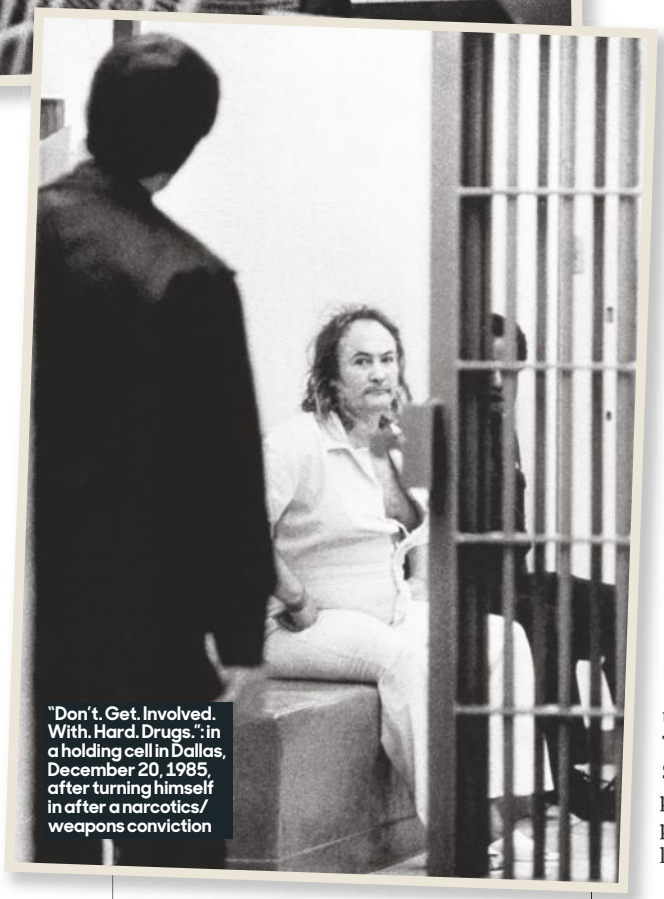
How does it compare to Neil's "Ohio"? It's a similar thing, but "Ohio" was a more successful shot. The best way to help people do the right thing is to lead by example and not preach at them. But every once in a while, you simply can't ignore it – like if your country starts killing its own children. So "Ohio" is probably the best of all those songs. Better than mine, better than "For What It's Worth", better than "Chicago". I watched Neil write it right in front of me, and when he finished I called Graham and said, "Get a studio right now. Right now, this minute. We're on our way to LA." We went in and cut it, we had it out in 10 days.

There are two political songs on your new album, "Somebody Other Than You" and "Look In Their Eyes". Do you see a through line back to your earlier political songs like "What Are Their Names" and "Long Time Gone"? Yeah, I do. I learned to stick up for what I believe in from people like Pete Seeger and Woody Guthrie and they learned it from other people before them. I have a ➤

The Byrds in 1965: (l–r) Chris Hillman, Crosby, Michael Clarke, Jim McGuinn, Gene Clark

EVAN HURD/SYGMA/SYGMA VIA GETTY IMAGES; HULTON-DEUTSCH COLLECTION/CORBIS/CORBIS VIA GETTY IMAGES

With Joni Mitchell, producing her first album, *Song To A Seagull*, in 1967



"Don't. Get. Involved. With. Hard. Drugs.": in a holding cell in Dallas, December 20, 1985, after turning himself in after a narcotics/ weapons conviction

picture of Pete Seeger reading Gandhi and it goes back to there. And before Gandhi, somebody else was proposing those same ideas. But I learned it from Pete and Woody and Joan Baez and Josh White and Odetta and folk singers before me when I was a folkie and I think other people are learning it from us. It's a thing that gets passed down.

Do you still consider yourself a folkie? No. All of those are just labels, man. I'm a musician. They always want to label you. They did it with The Byrds. They were so desperate to label us, because once you label the thing you don't have to think about it. That's a blah blah blah; now I know what that is. We do one thing, "Oh, it's folk rock!" We include some stuff we got off Ravi Shankar: "Oh, it's raga rock!" We do "Eight Miles High": "It's jazz rock!"

What's your relationship these days with *If I Could Only Remember My Name*? It's one of my favourite records. I am absolutely and totally proud of it. It was a turning point in my life.

Is it possible to separate the music from the events leading up to it? No. No, it's not. It was a very tough time for me. My girlfriend [*Christine Hinton*] had just got killed. I was hiding in the studio, really. I couldn't successfully exist anywhere but there. We had finished *Déjà Vu*, I had all these songs, and I just didn't know what else to do with myself. I was distraught and crazy. They don't tell you how to handle that, they don't teach that in Home Economics or your maths class. It hits you. She was a 21-year-old girl – bam! – dead. I loved her and it was very hard for me. So my friends, [*Jerry*] Garcia and all the other people that helped with that record – him primarily – came by every night; they knew where I'd be, and whoever showed up was the band and whichever song I started playing was recorded. It was a very organic thing and a lot of kindness, a lot of friendship. A lot of wonderful people helped me do it.

And it was No 2 in *Inside The Vatican* magazine's Top 10 Pop Albums Of All Time... I couldn't fucking believe it! The best part was Pink Floyd were at No 3. I got an email from David Gilmour saying, "Damn it!" Neither one of us could figure out why we were on that list or what in the hell they were thinking. We laughed a whole shitload about it.

***Lighthouse* is only your fifth solo album. What stopped you from making more?** When I wasn't making Crosby, Stills & Nash albums, I was making Crosby Nash albums. I liked working with Graham and we did some very, very good work on those records. I'm very proud of those records.

You've had a bit of a falling out recently, haven't you? Oh, yeah. Judging from the stuff Nash is saying in public, yeah, I would say so.

Have you heard either of the albums Neil has made with Promise Of The Real? Willie's kids? I saw a clip of them doing "Cortez". They got Neil out playing some of the best guitar I ever heard him play in my life. The chemistry between them and Neil is excellent, the music is excellent. Live, I totally support him being with them, they're fantastic. He's totally right to want to take down Monsanto – they're an obscene perversion – but I wish that Neil would be a little more rigorous about the records.

Neil's a guy on a mission at the moment. What do you remember about the last time CSNY went out, on the Freedom Of Speech Tour? It was good. We had a blast. Neil knew that we would piss a lot of people off, singing, "*Let's impeach the president for lying.*" When we got to that song in Atlanta, Georgia, probably a quarter of the audience walked out – stomped out – giving us the finger and shaking their fists at us. It was pretty exciting. We loved that, a lot! And of course we knew it was going to happen, so we had 11 camera crews, just in case.

It was an important time, with Iraq, George W Bush's presidency and the war on terror. Considering all that's going on now in America, if Neil came knocking tomorrow to get CSNY back together, would you go? Yeah. Now is an important time for America in a desperate sense. We are quite possibly just about to destroy the country, if this lunatic Trump gets in. He's an idiot, he's functionally illiterate, he doesn't know what the fuck he's doing and he's insane and he will have the button. That's not a very good prospect. Particularly not in the middle of a global warming crisis, which he is on the other side of. Particularly not when we've got racial tension at a peak high in the United States and he's aggravating it. These are very tense times in the United States. It's tough to be an American, particularly in Europe. What I do is tell people I'm Canadian, wear a little Maple leaf on my shoulder, that kind of thing.

"I'm the Canadian! Not the other guy!" That's it!

So you would all go out with Neil, if he called? I can't imagine how we wouldn't. I don't think he's going to, because he doesn't need to. He's doing great music and he doesn't have to split the take with those guys.

The *CSNY 1974* live album was amazing. Is there anything else in the CSNY archive you'd like to see released? Not really. To me, that's all ancient history and I don't really care about it. I wouldn't spend five minutes looking around back there in those dusty old tapes. I'm completely busy making brand-new music.

If you could give some advice to your 25-year-old self, what would it be? Don't. Get. Involved. With. Hard. Drugs. All it does is fuck you up and drag you away from your music.

Do you have a daily routine at home? We do.

SULFIATIMAGNUSON/GETTY IMAGES;BETTMANN/GETTY IMAGES

Neil Young guests with Crosby and Graham Nash at the Santa Cruz Civic Auditorium, California, August 12, 1977

What we try and do is get up, have a cup of coffee, and then we go for a walk – because I'm trying to stay alive. In my case, that's an iffy proposition. Then we have breakfast and do the business of the day: the laundry, the cleaning, go to the market. If I'm lucky, I've got recording or rehearsing. We try to accomplish as much each day as we humanly possibly can. But I spend time trying to write every day, every day.

How do you write? I keep guitars on the wall right next to me. I'm looking at one, two, three, four, five – five guitars in five different tunings right now here in my bedroom.

You're 75 in August. Do you think much about your legacy? No. I'm a bozo, man. I have a talent and I'm grateful for it, but I put my pants on one leg at a time, same as everybody, and I've made such egregious mistakes in my life that it's given me a perspective where I do not look at myself the way other people do. I definitely think it's not a healthy thing to do. You wind up standing there saying, "Gosh, I am significant." All it does is aggrandise my own ego and it doesn't advance me at all, doesn't teach me anything and I don't like it.

How's Joni? What I'm told is that she is doing well and that she's working hard to get herself back together. She's a very tough girl. I would bet on Joni rather than betting on anything else.

Have you seen her recently? No. I got permission to come once, but when we tried to put it together it wasn't a good day. So I'm going to keep trying until I can go and see her, because when you're sick or you've had a rough spot in your life, that's when friends count. People showed up for me when I was in hospital, when I was on the bottom, so I think that's a good thing to pay it forward.

Were you approached to play at the Desert Trip festival? No. If somebody had approached The Byrds, I would have wanted to do it. But I think it's a scam because all it is really is a parking lot, an empty field, a few acres of dust. So OK, you're standing there for hours and hours and hours. They sell you a bottle of water for $5. You can't tell who's on stage because they're a pinprick – that's why Jagger waves a scarf round, man, he's so far away you can't tell it's him. It's not the way to see any of those bands, least of all Neil. The sound outdoors at that place is crap. The situation is crap. It's a great story to be able to say, "I was there, I saw The Rolling Stones with Neil and everybody all at once." But it's a lousy concert. You could give me tickets to that and I wouldn't go.

> "I have a talent and I'm grateful for it, but I put my pants on one leg at a time"

In the year when we lost Bowie, Prince and so many others, there's something slightly ghoulish about billing it "once in a lifetime"... That's merchandising. Truth is, the whole thing is about merchandising. It's a gigantic money machine, and I'm not in it for money. That's not why I came to the party in the first place. I'm a musician, my life is about music and I love making music. I don't give a shit about the money. I don't give a shit about being a star. I don't give a shit about any of the rest of that stuff. It's not my thing.

When you first got together with Roger McGuinn and Gene Clark, did you have a plan? We were just guys who were folkies, who got together and we had seen The Beatles. So we knew what we wanted to be and we weren't! But Roger and Gene were singing these songs that Gene had written after he's listened to The Beatles. Roger could figure out how to play them in a Beatle-ish fashion and then I sat down with them and started singing harmonies. It was a completely organic thing.

McGuinn, Hillman, Stills, Nash, Young... what do you think links all your previous collaborators? We're all human beings and we're all gifted with talent. We're doing whatever our spirits tell us to do with that.

Has it all been worth it, so far? Totally. Love it. I just wish I'd done more music and less drugs. I regret the time I wasted being wasted, that I could have spent making more music. ●

ED PERLSTEIN/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES

Nash, photographed in March 2016 by Amy Grantham, whom he married in April 2019

AMY GRANTHAM

"CSNY have to be in love with each other to make great music"

2018. GRAHAM NASH recalls recent chats with Neil, his fallout with Croz and a career spent, musically and politically, trying to keep the peace. "I don't think we needed friction," he tells Rob Hughes about CSNY. "It was just *there*..."

Graham Nash in his new home town, Manhattan, 2016

AMY GRANTHAM

UNCUT AUGUST 2018

"WALKING in Manhattan is a joy. The day before yesterday, I walked six miles. I do that every couple of days. In fact, after I finish this interview with you I'm going to head uptown to 105th Street. I'm 90 blocks south of that, but I'm going to walk there and I'll probably walk back..."

Even at 76 years old, there's clearly no stopping Graham Nash. Aside from exploring Manhattan, he's currently limbering up for an extensive European tour, winding up in the UK in late July, before circling back to the States in the autumn. There is, too, the pressing business of finishing his new studio album, a relatively swift follow-up to 2016's *This Path Tonight*. Plus there's a terrific new compilation, *Over The Years...*, which documents the last half-century of his career, beginning with the songs recorded as one third of Crosby, Stills & Nash. Of particular interest to long-haul fans is the inclusion of a dozen demos that have never previously seen light of day.

It's also been 50 years since Nash left his native UK for California, quitting The Hollies to trade harmonies with David Crosby and Stephen Stills (and, in time, Neil Young). He's held dual citizenship since 1978, returning to the north of England a couple of times a year to visit his sister. His Manchester roots are still discernible in his speaking voice, though they've long been overgrown by American vernacular. "I was born in England and I'll be English 'til the day I die," he states. "But this is one world and I'm not a great lover of flags and borders and immigration stuff. People had asked if I was going to leave America if Trump became president. You *can't* leave. I have to stay and fight this man, because he's dragging the country backwards."

> "People asked if I would leave America if Trump became president. You *can't* leave"

Trump isn't Nash's only source of concern these days. In 2014, he had a major fallout with Crosby, his great friend and close ally, after the latter dismissed Nash's memoir, *Wild Tales*, as "full of bullshit". This, in turn, appears to have closed the door on the promise of any immediate activity regarding CSN/CSNY.

Nash instigated another major upheaval in his life around the time of *This Path Tonight*, when he left his wife of 38 years and moved from Hawaii to New York City. There he set up home with Amy Grantham, an artist and filmmaker half his age. "We live in the East Village," he explains. "It's probably the last *real* part of New York. Everything else is getting built up with gigantic skyscrapers and the tallest buildings in the world, but here it's very different from the rest of Manhattan. It's not changed at all since I first came here decades ago. Amy's lived here for about 13 years and she's the woman I fell in love with."

This, he asserts, is the ideal environment for him at this stage in his life. The relaxed attitude to celebrity means that he can wander through the city without the regular hassles that a two-time Rock & Roll Hall Of Famer might ordinarily be subject to: "If somebody recognises me, I get a tap on the shoulder or a thumbs-up. But in the rest of the country it's 'I saw you at Woodstock' and 'How's Neil?' People have seen it all before in New York."

Nash's daily routine is pretty straightforward. He'll absorb himself in the morning's news on TV and radio, then get on with his day and write, though only "if I find some situation that I feel deeply about". His enduring philosophy is a reminder of the late-'60s counterculture that

helped shape him. For Nash, every day counts. "Acid brought me to the realisation that everything is completely fucking meaningless, so everything is therefore incredibly important," he says. "I'm here on this planet, trying to do the best things I can in the time I have left. I feel healthy, but I have to live each day as if it's the last day of my life. Because it very well could be. Right now, it's a beautiful sunny day and I've just sat down with a cup of tea to talk to you. Life's good!"

In *Wild Tales* you painted an idyllic picture of family life in Hawaii. What made you uproot yourself so dramatically?
I basically wrote the autobiography for my grandchildren, because the eldest is only five or six years old and they have no idea who I was. But after I wrote it I began to re-evaluate my life. When I really got down inside myself, I realised that I was not happy. I'm 76 years old now and I want to live the rest of my life the best way I can.

That was a brave decision to make at your time of life, when the temptation might have been to just coast along... Indeed. I could have just said, "I'm 70-odd years old and I'll tolerate this until I die." It wasn't so bad, it wasn't like it was a tortuous time, but I just wasn't in love with my wife. And I needed to move on. I've always followed my heart, because that's what my mum and dad taught me to do. That's what's going on for me now. I watch Amy create every day. We have an apartment here in New York, with a small studio that we both use. I do my music and computer work on one side of the room and Amy does her painting and collage work on the other side.

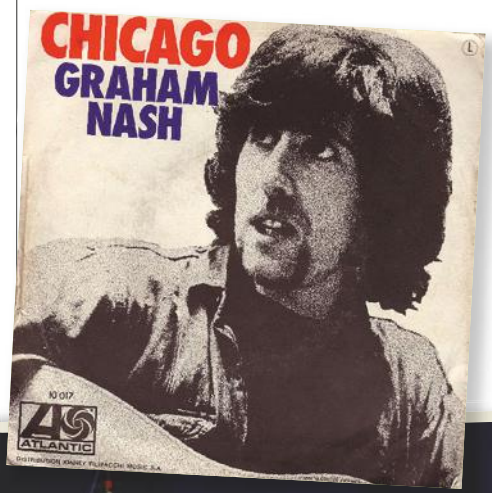
Has that reinvigorated you on an artistic level too? In a way. A lot of people point out that it's been 14 years between my last two solo albums, but in that time I made 16 CDs. I did my boxset, and Crosby's and Stephen's, and the *CSNY 1974* tour boxset and the *Demos* album and the *Greatest Hits*. I was a busy boy, but what happened to me in my emotional life forced me to focus on what my life was and what I wanted it to be.

Has the *Over The Years...* compilation been a product of that too? The demos are fascinating...
Aren't they? I just thought people might be interested in hearing things like "Teach Your Children" from 1968, with one acoustic guitar, then hearing what it turned into when me and David and Stephen got our hands on it.

Listening to the demo of "Military Madness", you might easily have become a protest folkie in the vein of Phil Ochs...
I know, but then I was with David, Stephen and Neil, and the world changes when you're with those crazy people.

Given the political climate in which you wrote that song in the early '70s, how does it compare to today? It's actually worse now. I didn't agree with a lot of what Richard Nixon did, but at least he had a brain and a heart. Unfortunately, I don't believe that Mr Trump cares about anybody but Mr Trump. Quite frankly, I've been here for almost 50 years now and I've never seen it so crazy. I've never seen a politician stir up and divide people with so much fear when it comes to those who aren't the same colour or religion as you. He's uncovered a very nasty part of American politics and he's thriving on it. This country absolutely deserves better.

Bearing in mind the anti-Bush Freedom Of Speech Tour of 2006, is the Trump situation enough to make CSNY reunite?
Unfortunately with CSNY, we have to really be in some kind of love with each other to make great music. We've been there in the past and we've been on the other end in the past. I don't see it at all, myself. I haven't spoken to Crosby in two years.



Do you know what upset him so much about your book? I don't, actually. Two months before I published *Wild Tales*, I sent the proofs to David and Stephen and Neil. I said, "Look, if there's anything in here that you want me to change, or anything you don't agree with, just let me know and I'll deal with it before I publish." Nobody said one word. Not one. So I presumed that everybody was cool and I published. And *that's* when David got... David was upset, I think, because he thought that the stories I told were his to tell. But he's already told them in many interviews and his first two autobiographies. Obviously he didn't read the proofs, so he doesn't have any right to get pissed with me. That's what's going on. Sometimes David's not very grown up.

So has that friendship gone now? Oh, yes.

Do you miss him? I don't miss *him*, I miss the music.

But you've often stated that the music takes precedent... If Stephen or Neil or David brought me songs that moved my soul, I'd have to think about it, because I *am* a musician. And the sad part is the loss of the music. But getting back to things like "Military Madness" and it being so relevant today, what about "Immigration Man"? What about "Chicago"?

Ten years ago, you altered the lyrics of "Chicago" and turned it into "Denver", to coincide with the Democratic Convention being held there. This suggests that these songs are endlessly fluid... They *are* fluid. But I still sing them with as much passion as when I wrote them, because I owe that to my audience. My audience needs to know two things. One – I want to be there. And two – I want to see them smiling on the way out. That's when I know I've done my job.

You sing the lines "*we can change the world*" with such conviction on the original version of "Chicago". Do you still feel as strongly today? I do. I still believe that even the smallest action can change the world. And it's not necessarily in music. Look at the guy who was ➤

Four play: on the Freedom Of Speech Tour, the Sleep Train Pavilion, Concord, CA, July 25, 2006

TIM MOSENFELDER/GETTY IMAGES

Love's young dream: Joni Mitchell and Graham Nash, Heathrow Airport, December 30, 1969

the janitor at the Watergate Hotel. At two in the morning he was probably sat at his desk, with a nine-inch black-and-white television showing the local game and a light beer. And he has to go check the rooms. When he comes across a room that has tape on the door, does he investigate or go back to the television? Well this kid made a choice. He chose to investigate and, eventually, he brought down the president of the United States.

Crosby has said that he didn't blossom as a songwriter until he joined CSN. Do you feel the same? Absolutely. With Allan Clarke and Tony Hicks in The Hollies, I'd learned to create songs that had melodies you couldn't forget after hearing them a couple of times, but the lyrics left a lot to be desired. "On A Carousel" and "Carrie Anne" are fine records, but they don't say much. When I came to America and joined David and Stephen and Neil – and of course I was living with Joni – they were as serious as a heart attack about their lyrics. I learned that if I could take what I had with The Hollies in terms of melody, but put decent words with it, *then* I'd be talking.

"Our House" is a famous paean to your time with Joni. Did her influence open you up creatively? Absolutely. She was an incredible part of my life. I learned a lot from watching her write, I learned a lot from living with her.

Have you seen her lately? I saw her a couple of months ago. I went down to visit her, to see exactly what was happening with her health. She was bright, she was lucid and she was talking. She wasn't moving around then, but she has a great team of people looking after her and I heard, just recently, that she's now walking again. So I think she'll come back, it's just going to take a little longer than people thought. She's on the mend, for sure.

You've likened bringing Neil into the CSN fold to "lobbing a live grenade into a vacuum". How did you cope with that?

It was tough for me, because David and Stephen and I had just created that incredible vocal harmony, which had turned me on enough to leave my country and my entire band. That's how powerful that three-part blend was. So the addition of Neil didn't sit with me very well. I said to David and Stephen: "Before we can invite this kid into our band, I've got to meet him." So Neil and I had breakfast here on Bleecker Street in Manhattan one morning and I would've made him king of the world after that. He was so funny and self-assured and so... dark is not the right word, but you know what I mean. It's a slightly darker shade of music than CSN makes.

> "I'm talking to Stephen, I'm talking to Neil. No-one's talking to Crosby. What can you do?"

You were also privy to an unusual private playback of *Harvest*... Ha! David and I had bought Neil two black swans when he bought that ranch and lake near San Francisco. He invited me over one day to listen to *Harvest*. I was expecting to go into his studio and have him blast it out, so I was kind of dumbstruck when he said, "Get in the boat." I thought that maybe he had a cassette player and headphones in there, but oh no. Instead he rowed out to the middle of the lake and he'd it rigged up so that his house was one speaker and the barn was another. Elliot Mazer [*Young's co-producer*] was on the shore and Neil shouted over: "More barn!" It was so typically Neil. Years later, somebody made a T-shirt with 'More Barn!' printed on it. I still have one.

Have you had much contact with Neil lately? I had breakfast with him about two months ago, when he came to New York. I'd collected a lot of Neil Young lyrics over the years, stuff that'd been left in the studio after the sessions were over, stuff that nobody gave a shit about. But I'd put them away and Neil decided he wanted them back. The truth is, he's my friend, he wrote them and it included his wedding list and a design of the house that, maybe if he got rich enough, he would be able to build. Which he did. It was all probably worth three-quarters of a million dollars and I just handed them over to Neil.

Have you heard much of his Promise Of The Real stuff? Yes, I have. Neil likes to *be* there. You've got to bring your A-game when you play with him, because he brings his every second. That's one of the things I like about Neil when he plays with people like Promise Of The Real, because they're energetic young kids.

Did CSNY *need* friction, somehow, to prosper? I don't think we needed friction, it was just there [*laughs*]. It would get pretty tense, occasionally. But once again, the music is the most important thing about us. And the truth is that if we never make another note of music together again, at least look at what we achieved.

You're traditionally viewed as the peacemaker in CSNY. Has that role become less crucial to you now? It's become less important to me because we're not... I'm talking to Stephen, I'm talking to Neil and no-one's talking to Crosby. So what can you do? Crosby's on his path and we're on ours. So be it.

What would it take to get you all back together? It's really simple. We have to *like* each other. I saw Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel when they had dressing rooms half a mile from each other and only came together for the songs on stage. I saw The Police at the Hollywood Bowl and it was obvious that they didn't want to be there. I saw a Bob Dylan concert recently, where Bob didn't pay any attention to the audience whatsoever. Never said hello or goodbye. Nothing. I can't stand that myself, because people pay hard-earned money to go and see rock'n'roll people. I need to give them value for money, that's what I want to do.

What exactly happened with CSN's aborted album with Rick Rubin in 2012? Me and David and Stephen have produced many successful

EVENING STANDARD/HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

records over the years, which is a short way of saying that we know what the fuck we're doing. When we were working with Rick we wanted to do "Blackbird" and "Norwegian Wood", covers of songs we wished *we'd* written. But Rick said no, that there would only be one Beatles song on the record. So Crosby told him: "There'll only be one Beatles song on the record if *we* say there's only one fucking Beatles song on the record. Do not tell us what the fuck to do and what to sing!" It was over from that moment. Rick is a fine record producer and, who knows, maybe our career might've taken a different route had it been a successful project. But he didn't handle the situation well. And once you stir Crosby up, forget it. It's not worth it.

How important was it to end *Over The Years*... with "Myself At Last", a confessional song from your most recent studio album? When we booked the studio to record *This Path Tonight*, we went in there the night before we were due to start, so that we could all make sure everything was set up properly. The version you hear of "Myself At Last" was the first attempt at the first song that we ever tried. That's why I put it on there. I think people learn a little something about me from it.

Will there be a new album sometime soon? Absolutely. Shane Fontayne and I had written 20 songs, 10 of which ended up on *This Path Tonight* – 13 if you buy the deluxe version – so we had seven left over that didn't make the journey. I've written more songs since and I'm sure that Shane's got a couple of ideas too. Once we're on the road we'll have it figured out and we'll work on getting a new record done. It won't be 14 years between these two, I can tell you that now.

***This Path Tonight* seemed to be born from emotional chaos...** That's exactly right. Emotional chaos set to music.

So will the new songs reveal a more loved-up Graham Nash? Yes. Because I *feel* differently. I felt very alone for the last couple of years, regarding my family. Fortunately, my girlfriend [*now wife*] Amy is well on top of the situation and has been very supportive of what I did. She's actually been turning me on to David Bowie's music lately too. I must confess I didn't listen to a lot of it at the time, but I'm certainly coming to realise that the man was a genius. Amy has a large tattoo on her back that says, "Drifting into my Solitude", which is a line from a David Bowie song [*"Sound And Vision"*]. So I've been listening and studying. Look what he was doing in 1973. When I was still in blue jeans, that fucker was in a dress! What a sad bloody death that was. And Prince, too.

Have those deaths made you more aware of your own temporality? Of course they have. And it makes you want to use every second the best way you can, because it could fucking end *instantly*.

Is legacy something you think about much? No, but I'm beginning to realise now, as I'm getting older, that some of the songs that I've written have really helped people, really given them some joy and maybe something to think about. I'm from Salford, for God's sake! But I managed to do something good with whatever gifts I was given. ●

"WE DIDN'T HAVE A GOOD NIGHT..."

Nash on the fabled CSNY 1974 live album

ALONGSIDE co-producer Joel Bernstein, Nash is chief archivist of all things CSN-related. Their most recent task was *CSNY 1974*, compiled from recordings made during the quartet's groundbreaking stadium tour of that summer, including a huge Wembley show with Joni Mitchell and The Band. "Somebody sent me a bootleg of Wembley and it was quite awful, actually," says Nash. "We didn't have a good night. We'd snorted too much coke and been up all night beforehand. So we weren't great and we knew it, but I wanted to show the world that Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young was a really fine roc'n'roll band. So I took the 10 shows that we'd recorded onto multi-track and turned it into one set. The main difficulty for me and Joel and [*sound engineer*] Stanley Johnston was that each of those shows was recorded in a different place, of course – different sizes and echoes, completely different buildings. And I had to make it appear like you were sitting in the middle of the 10th row, listening to one performance. Technically, it was very tricky. Is there much more in the archive? Oh yeah. I'm not going to give out any details, but there's a *lot* of it."

GIJSBERT HANEKROOT/REDFERNS

CSNY rock out at Oakland Coliseum, California, July 14, 1974

CROSBY, STILLS, NASH & YOUNG

Live and Compilations

RELEASED 1974-2014

Déjà vu? Carry on! The obligatorily tangled tale of CSNY's compilations and live albums.

BY PETER WATTS

THERE'S a note of rather hopeful promise in the title of Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young's first compilation that tells us a lot about what was going on behind the scenes in 1974. **So Far** ATLANTIC, 1974 ★★★★ is only missing a couple of exclamation marks to confirm the title's sense of desperation. It came out after the quartet had been coaxed into a reunion for their 1974 stadium tour, but for Atlantic this was a stopgap and placeholder for the riches they hoped were still to come. After going their separate ways amid some rancour after the *Déjà Vu* tour, the quartet had waited until 1973 before reconvening, tentatively starting work on a planned follow-up called *Human Highway*. Continued bad feeling meant that little progress had been made on this by the time they went out on tour, so Atlantic pushed out *So Far* and then crossed their fingers a CSNY studio album would follow.

As a compilation, it couldn't really fail. The band had only released two studio albums and one non-album single at this point, so there wasn't much material to choose from. The compilation contained a pretty uncontroversial mix of singles – all the A-sides bar "Marrakesh Express" – and album tracks. Its chief selling point was that this was the first time both sides of the "Ohio" single were available on 33rpm and that Joni Mitchell had painted the rather natty cover art. That – plus ongoing publicity from the tour – was enough to take the album to No 1, their third in a row following *Déjà Vu* and *4 Way Street*. It remains their second-highest-selling album. At this point in, they were unstoppable.

The compilation came out in August, as CSNY were rolling round the US on their huge 1974 tour. It was one of the most ambitious tours of its time, with the group playing a succession of vast football and baseball stadiums, and it was also one that became so legendary for the bad blood, wasted money and drug consumption that it was rechristened by David Crosby as the "Doom Tour". For decades, the tour was recalled only in bootlegs, but in 2014 Graham Nash rolled up his sleeves and attempted to make sense of the existing material for the **CSNY 1974** RHINO, 2014 ★★★★ boxset. The first and third CDs feature full-band electric songs, while the middle disc has acoustic songs with much of the strongest harmonising, such as the cover of "Blackbird" or the gorgeous version of "Suite: Judy Blue Eyes". There's a lot of music here, so Nash also came up with a 16-track single-CD version.

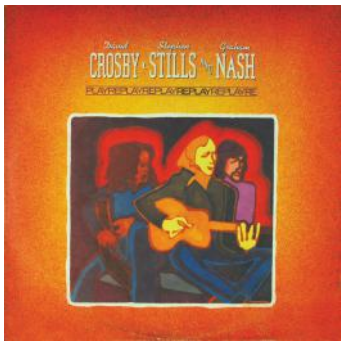
Both versions depict a band that are once again (and as usual) in a strange place – ostensibly together but truthfully apart; supposedly collaborating but actually competing – and doing so while coked up and playing in front of huge audiences in stadiums that don't really support the sort of folky subtleties that originally made CSN such an attraction. Support comes from Tim Drummond, Russ Kunkel and Joe Lala, musicians who had played with all four members in various formats.

It's a wild and woolly ride and Nash has done well to make some sense of it, drawing out the best performances from a number of shows in a bid to showcase each headliner's talents. The singers once again draw material from various parts of their vast repertoires, using their band members as props and sparring partners. Some of the songs – Crosby's "Carry Me" and "Time After Time", "Fieldworker" by Nash and "Myth Of Sisyphus" and "My Angel" by Stills – were at this point unrecorded and may have been contenders for the never-completed *Human Highway* LP.

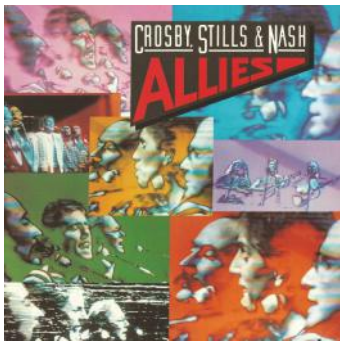
While the other three have their moments, Young is the dominant figure. He was on a real roll at this point, and by 2014 Nash was able to put egos to one side and give Young his due. He debuted numerous songs on the tour, including "Mellow My Mind" and "Long May You Run", and several of these – "Traces", "Hawaiian Sunrise", "Pushed It Over The End", the Nixon-baiting incidental "Goodbye Dick" and "Love Art Blues" – have never been officially released. It's obvious that Young was ➤

CRITICS' VERDICTS

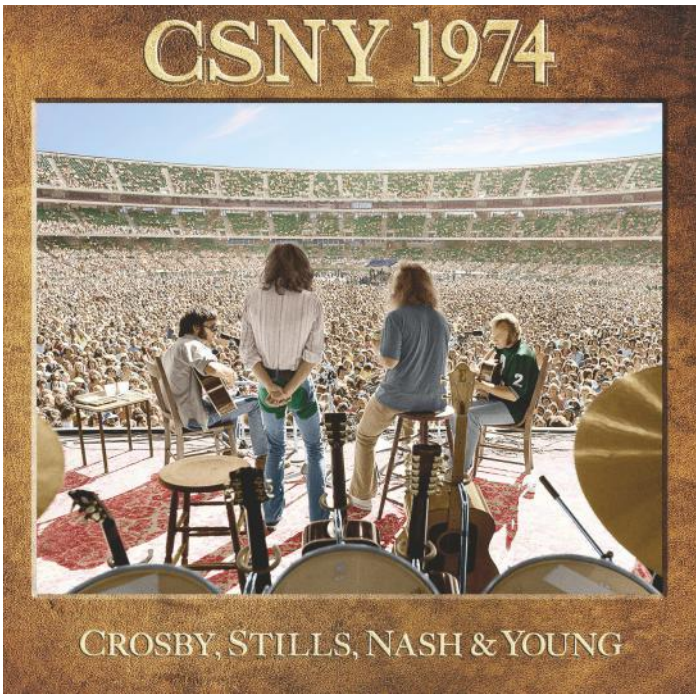
CSN ('91 boxset)
"A product of its era as surely as loons and liquorice-flavoured Rizlas, their coming together in a dizzying egg nog of harmonies (glutinous yet frequently intoxicating) and jazzy/folksome arrangements sounds solid enough on paper, but what price these days a seven-minute paean to one's 'lady' ('Suite: Judy Blue Eyes') or songs about your friggin' *yacht* ('Wooden Ships')?" **Bobby Surf, NME, 14/12/1991**

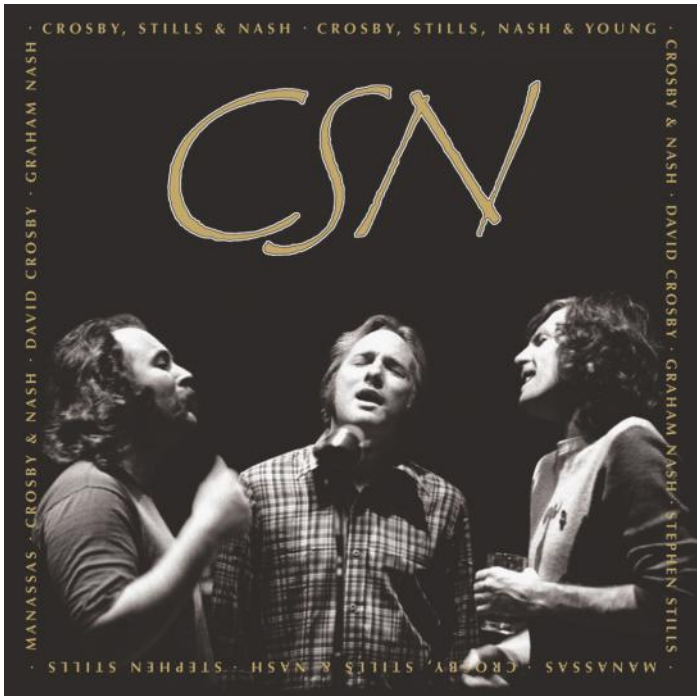

CROSBY, STILLS & NASH

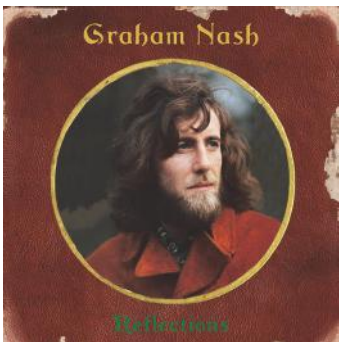
CROSBY
STILLS
NASH
YOUNG
SO FAR


CROSBY, STILLS & NASH
ALLIES

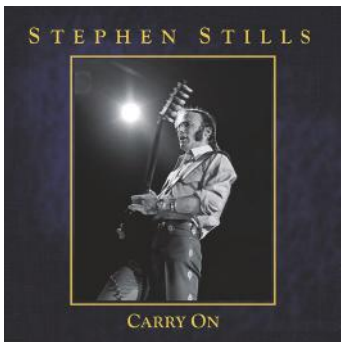
Crosby, Stills + Nash
CSN
dEMOS

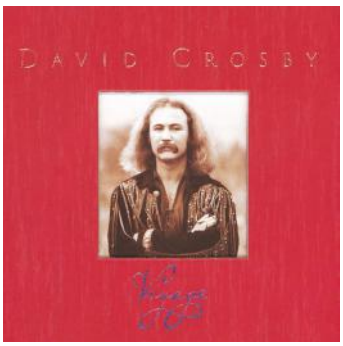

CSNY 1974
CROSBY, STILLS, NASH & YOUNG

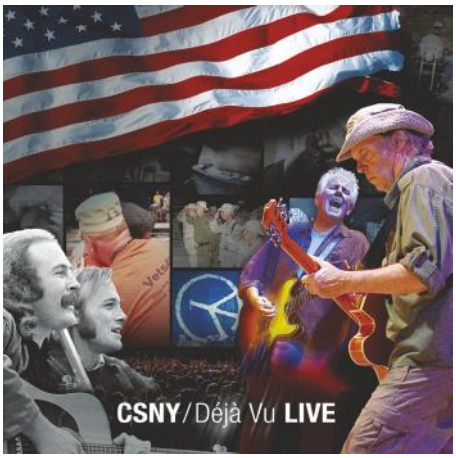

CROSBY, STILLS & NASH · CROSBY, STILLS, NASH & YOUNG
CSN
MANASSAS · CROSBY & NASH · DAVID CROSBY · GRAHAM NASH
CROSBY & NASH · DAVID CROSBY · GRAHAM NASH · STEPHEN STILLS


Graham Nash
Reflections

CSN
Carry On


STEPHEN STILLS
CARRY ON


DAVID CROSBY


CSNY/Déjà Vu LIVE

CSN
CROSBY STILLS & NASH
★ GREATEST HITS

Crosby, Stills & Nash

Reunited: the second date of the CNSY reunion tour, Seattle, WA, July 9, 1974

BETTMANN/GETTY IMAGES

operating on a different creative level to his peers. He was also travelling separately from them, something that boded ill for the studio album that was still due to happen. Further sessions duly took place, but the album was scrapped after a series of arguments and amusingly acrimonious tape-wiping incidents.

Some of the politics of a deteriorating situation seeped into the compilation **Replay** ATLANTIC, 1980 ★. This was demanded by the record label when they learnt that Stills and Nash were planning to work without Crosby and asked for something they could sell with the CSN name on it. Stills and Nash gave them a mishmash of old tracks from *Crosby, Stills & Nash* and *CSN* (among them a new mix of *CSN*'s "I Give You Give Blind", plus three tracks from three Stephen Stills solo albums, one from Crosby and Nash's *Wind On The Water* and an overdubbed version of *Déjà Vu*'s "Carry On". There's no overlap with *So Far* and Neil Young was entirely absent – but David Crosby isn't much present either. Every previous album had gone Top 10 – this one didn't even make the Top 100. It has been out of print since it was released.

Relationships had bottomed out when they released the semi-live **Allies** ATLANTIC, 1983 ★★, and the album hints at reconciliation. David Crosby's heavy drug use had reached a point where he was soon to be imprisoned, but that seems to have given *Allies* a focus. It features live cuts from 1977 and 1982 and at times can feel like Stills and Nash's attempt to protect or ego boost their beleaguered buddy: Crosby's 1977 cover of Joni Mitchell's "He Played Real Good For Free" and his playing on

> Three tracks from *Live It Up* on '91's *Carry On* feels excessive

Stills' "Dark Star" are two of the album's highlights, while Nash also delivers a deeply sympathetic version of the self-referential "Wasted On The Way". The record also featured a pair of new studio tracks, including Stills' decent "War Games", which was intended to be the theme tune for the Matthew Broderick film but got pulled at the last minute. It was CSN's worst-selling album and their last until Crosby cleaned up and Young returned for 1988's *American Dream*.

By 1991, CSN had come through the depths of the 1980s to gain some sort of critical reconsideration. Like many of the great artists of the '60s, they were then treated to a career-spanning compilation in the form of a deluxe boxset containing a mix of greatest moments, alternate versions and unheard songs over 77 tracks and 4 CDs. Despite the title, **CSN** ATLANTIC, 1991 ★★★★★ also features a bit of Y, although the gnarly one's presence is limited to just over a dozen tracks. Instead, the focus is on the three originators, both in their original incarnation and in the various permutations that followed – Nash & Crosby, Stills & Nash, plus songs by Manassas and others from Stills, Nash and Crosby solo albums. There are plenty of treats on offer for anybody with the time to pore through an album that moves largely chronologically, starting with tracks from the earliest CSN recording sessions, including an unreleased version of "Blackbird" that highlights the beauty of the harmonies that first brought the trio together.

There are *Déjà Vu* outtakes ("Horses Through A Rainstorm", "The Lee Shore"), a CSNY rehearsal version of the sublime

"Helplessly Hoping" and three tracks from the various self-sabotaged attempts at recording 'Human Highway' – "See The Changes", "Homeward Through The Haze" and "Taken At All". There's also the chance to hear alternative versions of "Woodstock", "You Don't Have To Cry", "Guinnevere", "Suite: Judy Blue Eyes" and "Almost Cut My Hair". The later discs are particularly useful at pulling together some of the fantastic 1970s solo material that casual fans might otherwise have missed, as well as beautiful recordings by CSN, N&C and S&N that could easily have been ignored or avoided by those focusing on the first two albums.

It helps that there is no Young solo material around to unbalance things – indeed the only tracks actually written by Young are "Helpless" and "Ohio", although we also get a live Stills/Nash version of the Stills-Young co-write "Got It Made" on the final CD. Even the final disc of weaker material is redeemed by smart tracklisting and the decision to close things out with the non-chronological but entirely appropriate "Find The Cost Of Freedom". It's lovingly put together, too, featuring input from Crosby, Stills and Nash. Most importantly, it sounded better than the original CD reissues of the studio albums then widely available. This full set was quickly followed by **Carry On** ATLANTIC, 1991 ★★★★, an excellent two-disc sampler that contained a clever mix of hits, acclaimed deep cuts and 13 previously unreleased tracks. The only quibble was the presence of three tracks from *Live It Up*, which feels excessive.

This two-disc sampler was the only Crosby, Stills & Nash retrospective for a surprisingly long time, until the release of the single CD **Greatest Hits** ATLANTIC, 2005 ★★★★. This 19-song disc focused on releases from the debut album and *CSN*, *Daylight Again* and the non-Young tracks from *Déjà Vu* ("Our House", "Teach Your Children" and "Carry On"). That means there's no room for "Ohio" or "Woodstock", even though these were two of their greatest hits, and there's certainly something slightly unnerving about this removal of Young from the official record, albeit one that sits comfortably with the quartet's historic tendency to erase each other's work. And as with the *CSN* box, the absence of Young does create a better general balance, allowing the music to focus on magical harmonies and a plaintive sense of nostalgic longing. The latter is also captured in **Demos** RHINO, 2009 ★★★, which contains generally acoustic and largely solo demo versions of songs recorded between 1968 and 1971. Highlights include Stills' early version of "Love The One You're With", Crosby & Stills' pre-Nash "Long Time Gone" and Crosby, Nash and Young's gorgeous lilting take on Crosby's "Music Is Love".

CSN continued to tour throughout the 1990s, but Young only joined them for one-off performances until 2000, when he agreed to tour to support *Looking Forward*. Further tours followed, with the 2006 shows captured in **Déjà Vu Live** REPRISE, 2008 ★★★, a heavily politicised set that features absolutely terrible artwork and an extremely misleading title. Young was touring *Living With War*, his punkish anti-Bush LP, and he plays that album pretty much in its entirety, including three versions of the title track. The other three singers were happy to give their own political songs an airing, among them old favourites "For What It's Worth", "What Are Their Names", "Wooden Ships", "Military Madness" and "Teach Your Children". The result is a strange blend of '60s protest and Young's very contemporary blasts at Dubya. Strangely, the shared political focus and urgent nostalgia seems to bind the quartet together more closely than on any other live recording.

Some of that spirit carries over on to **CSN 2012** ATLANTIC, 2012 ★★★, a document of the Crosby, Stills & Nash tour of that year, which was hastily arranged after Young walked away from a planned Buffalo Springfield reunion. Although dominated by Stills and Nash compositions, it's a sweet affair with heartfelt performances of a rash of deep cuts and classics, including several from *Crosby, Stills & Nash* rarely heard on CSN or CSNY live records such as "Helplessly Hoping" and "Guinnevere".

As well as compiling the *CSNY 1974* live set, Nash also spent time curating solo box sets for himself and his two compadres. First out was Crosby's **Voyage** RHINO, 2006 ★★★★, a three-disc comp of Byrds, solo, CSN, CSNY and CPR material, including a disc of unreleased material, largely demos. **Reflections** RHINO, 2009 ★★★ was Nash's own set, while the pick of the bunch was Stills' **Carry On** RHINO, 2012 ★★★★, which stretched strong material over four discs and did an excellent job of highlighting a huge and sometimes under-appreciated musical talent. ●

CRITICS' VERDICTS

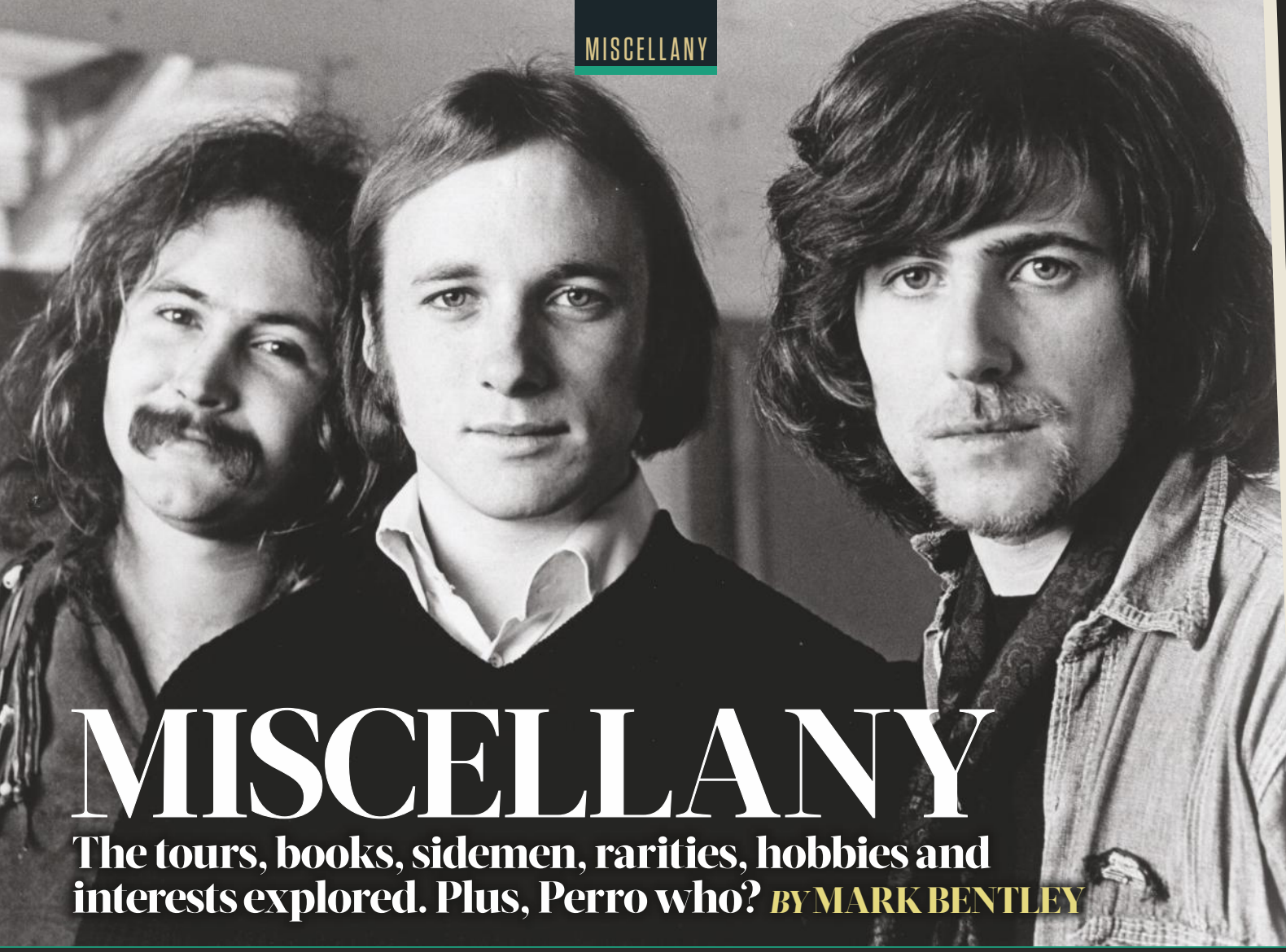
DÉJÀ VU LIVE
"This is an urgent, unedited document of social realism, powerful because it reveals these eminent artists caught in the act of channelling their enmity and indignation into a coherent and forceful statement." **Jaan Uhelszki, Uncut, October 2008**

DEMOS
"It's interesting stuff, but without the documentary quality of, say, Stills' *Just Roll Tape*... It's all rather spartan; a lot of Canyon but no great laurels." **John Robinson, Uncut, August 2009**

CSNY 1974
"It's evident that Young is performing on a different level to his bandmates. Creatively, he's on fire, while CSN are doused, or prone to indulgence." **Alastair McKay, Uncut, August 2014**

Nash, Stills and Crosby looking unusually alert: 1980s

LGI STOCK/CORBIS/VCG VIA GETTY IMAGES



MISCELLANY

The tours, books, sidemen, rarities, hobbies and interests explored. Plus, Perro who? BY MARK BENTLEY

WHAT WAS PERRO?

A brief history of the Planet Earth Rock And Roll Orchestra

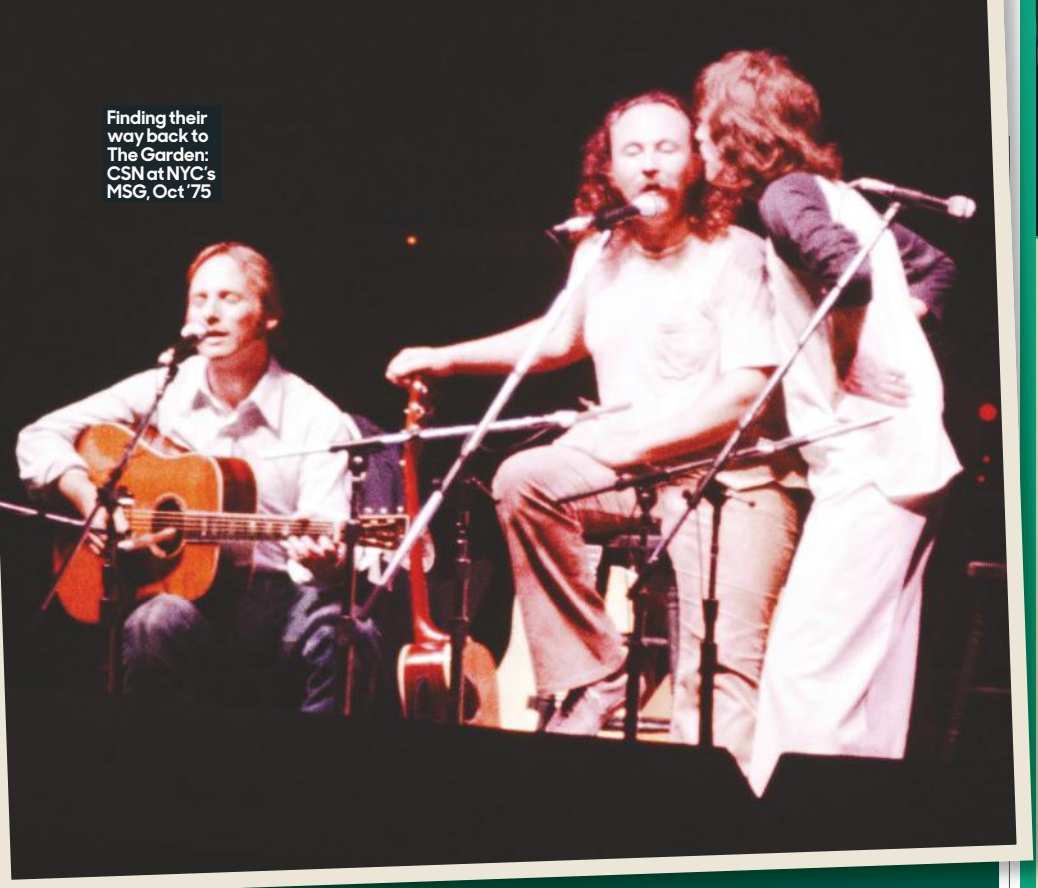
SO, you're a globally famous West Coast muso in the early '70s. What do you do on your days off? If you are a member of Jefferson Airplane, the Grateful Dead, Quicksilver Messenger Service or actually Jerry Garcia, you probably hang out a Wally Heider's studio in Hyde Street, San Francisco, sharing, er, musical inspiration with Crosby and co. You'd drop in, jam a bit, improvise on constantly running tape – and then find yourself appearing on albums from across the CSN diaspora.

The informal name for this collective was the Planet Earth Rock And Roll Orchestra – coined by Paul Kantner – and their first recordings appeared on the Jefferson Starship LP *Blows Against The Empire*, released in November 1970. Recorded at the same place, with similar personnel, at the same time, this is very much a sister release to Crosby's spectral *If I Could Only Remember My Name*, whose gatefold inlay credits the gang.

The PERRO abbreviation comes from a less spiritual place: the fact that Crosby and engineer Stephen Barncard could only physically fit a written abbreviation on the spine of the hours and hours of tape they were wading through. The PERRO crew – including Jack Casady, Jorma Kaukonen, Phil Lesh, Grace Slick and Mickey Hart – would variously appear on LP releases including *Songs For Beginners*, *Graham Nash/David Crosby*, Hart's *Rolling Thunder*, blues violinist Papa John Creach's eponymous effort, and Kantner/Slick albums *Sunfighter* and *Baron Von Tollbooth & The Chrome Nun*. A decade later, in 1983, Kanter would celebrate this time on his sci-fi concept solo effort *The Planet Earth Rock And Roll Orchestra* – perhaps a less essential release than those listed above.

PERRO types: (l–r) Jefferson Airplane's Paul Kantner, Grace Slick, Spencer Dryden, Marty Balin, Jack Casady and (top) Jorma Kaukonen

DON PAULSEN/MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES, /MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES



Finding their way back to The Garden: CSN at NYC's MSG, Oct '75

WASTED ON THE WAY
An extreme CSN(Y) Tour Timeline

CSN (& sometimes Y) have done some utterly relentless touring in their time. This probably-not-comprehensive timeline* – approaching 2,000 live dates over 50 years, across the globe – tells the story...

*Tours are CSN, unless indicated. Gig numbers do not include all one-off/warm-up or awards gigs, or any solo or duo shows or performances with other bands.

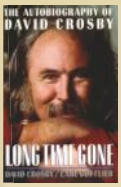
1969/70 CSNY, AUGUST–JANUARY, LOCATIONS: USA (36 dates), UK, Sweden, Denmark (1 date each)
1970 CSNY DÉJÀ VU TOUR, MAY–AUGUST: USA only (22)
1974 CSNY SO FAR/'DOOM TOUR', JULY–SEPTEMBER: USA (28), Canada (2), UK (1)
1977 MAY–JUNE: USA (15)
1978 JULY–AUGUST: USA (20), Canada (1)
1982 DAYLIGHT AGAIN, JULY–DECEMBER: USA (59)
1983 ALLIES, JUNE–JULY: France (5), Germany (5), Italy (4), UK (3), Netherlands (1), Spain (1), Switzerland (1)
1984 JULY–NOVEMBER: USA (60)
1985 JUNE–SEPTEMBER: USA (55 dates, plus Live Aid as CSNY)
1987 JANUARY, JUNE–SEPTEMBER, NOVEMBER: USA (73)
1988 AMERICAN DREAM, JUNE–SEPTEMBER: USA (36), Canada (2)
1989 JULY–NOVEMBER: USA (25), Canada (5), Germany (2)
1990 LIVE IT UP, APRIL–OCTOBER: USA (74), Canada (5)
1991 MARCH–NOVEMBER: USA (35), Australia (12), Japan (4), Canada (1)
1992 MARCH–NOVEMBER: USA (68), UK (6), Germany (3), Italy (2), Netherlands (1), Ireland (1), France (1), Denmark (1)
1994 25TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR, FEB–OCTOBER: USA (68), Canada (2)
1996 JAN–NOVEMBER: USA (71), South Africa (9), Canada (2)
1997 FEB–SEPTEMBER: USA (69), Puerto Rico (1)
1998/99 SEPTEMBER–MARCH: USA (28)
2000 CSNY2K LOOKING FORWARD TOUR, JAN–OCTOBER: USA (43), Canada (2)
2002 CSNY, FEB–APRIL: USA (39), Canada (2)
2005 GREATEST HITS TOUR, MARCH–SEPTEMBER: USA (35), UK (6), Italy (5), Norway (2), Netherlands (2), Germany (2), Sweden (1), France (1), Finland (1), Spain (1), Switzerland (1), Canada (1), Belgium (1)
2006 CSNY FREEDOM OF SPEECH TOUR, JULY–SEPTEMBER: USA (31), Canada (4)
2007 JUNE–DECEMBER: Australia (14), USA (2) New Zealand (2)
2008 MAY–AUGUST: USA (36), Canada (4)
2009 DEMOS TOUR, JUNE–OCTOBER: USA (44), UK (4), Netherlands (1), Ireland (1), France (1), Germany (1), Canada (1), Belgium (1)
2010 MAY–OCTOBER: USA (42), Italy (5), UK (5), Germany (3), France (2), Netherlands (1), Ireland (1), Switzerland (1), Canada (1), Belgium (1)
2012 MARCH–OCTOBER: USA (58), Australia (5), Brazil (3), New Zealand (1), Argentina (1)
2013 MAY–OCTOBER: USA (18), Germany (9), UK (8), France (4), Italy (3), Netherlands (2), Monaco (1), Spain (1), Belgium (1)
2014 MARCH–OCTOBER: USA (57)
2015 WORLD TOUR 2015, MARCH–OCTOBER: USA (17), UK (10), Japan (5), Italy (3), France (2), Germany (2), Singapore (1), Philippines (1), Norway (1), Netherlands (1), Ireland (1), Denmark (1), Switzerland (1), Belgium (1)

Refreshing the parts...: CSN at the Heineken Music Hall, Amsterdam, Sept 24, 2015

THE CAN'T-PUT-DOWNS
Realities they left years ago... The CSNY autobiographies

IF you're after an objective, empirical and well-researched account of life in CSN(Y), you'd be very much directed towards the heavyweight works. These would certainly include the classic Dave Zimmer books *Crosby, Stills & Nash: The Biography* and *Four Way Street: The Crosby Stills Nash & Young Reader*. And possibly Peter Doggett's more recent *CSNY*, which focuses on the formative years.

If you want sheer entertainment, personal agendas, and a window into our heroes' distinct personalities, it's the self-penned stuff that demands your attention. Here goes...



DAVID CROSBY: LONG TIME GONE

So much coke. Possibly the definitive *mea culpa* rock memoir, this caused a sensation on its release in 1988, and is still among the most breathtakingly frank books you will ever read. With writer Carl Gottlieb to guide him, Croz recalls a descent into addiction and chaos, via firearms and freebasing. Anecdotes fizz, but dates are hazy, and you probably get to find out more about his yacht The Mayan than the music. Follow-up *Since Then: How I Survived Everything And Lived To Tell About It* is self-explanatory, but less engaging.

SAMPLE AMAZON REVIEW: *"This will not teach you to love Crosby... it could lead you to loathe him."*

GRAHAM NASH: WILD TALES

"Suddenly, Joni was at the door and nothing else mattered..." Endlessly enjoyable – but perhaps not in the way its author intended – 2014 effort *Wild Tales* is Nash's mission statement in 368 pages. There's some top bitching here, but the positives are the personal insights – he's honest, candid and, yes, caring in his assessment of his life-defining relationships with Joni, Croz and (now ex-) wife Susan. But geez, man, it's full of hippie phrasing: perhaps the Englishness has been harmonised out of him.

SAMPLE AMAZON REVIEW: *"A little humility would have improved the read. I have just bought his latest album, so I hope his songwriting is as good as he claims it is."*

NEIL YOUNG: WAGING HEAVY PEACE

Dylan's peerless *Chronicles* has an elliptical time-jump approach to its material. Similarly enigmatic, Young mind-fucks with chronology too, but in a conspicuously less deliberate manner (ie, it's all over the place). It's a contrary but somehow comforting read – and Young speaks to you, dear reader, as if in intimate conversation. There are some killer anecdotes, and he's surprisingly self-deprecating, and surprisingly nice about a lot of people, including those he was involved in litigation against (yes you, David Geffen).

SAMPLE AMAZON REVIEW: *"An inspiring read, even though a bit scatter-brained and slightly disorientating..."*

STEPHEN STILLS: TBC!

The only member not to release an autobiography, Stills is apparently working on one. Quite slowly. As long ago as 2014, he told *Rolling Stone*: "It's the hardest fucking thing in the world! I mean, there's writing and there's typing..." Extant Stills-focused efforts include David Robert's unauthorised (but available!) *Change Partners*, which fails to offer the kind of colour the man himself might conjure. Let's wait, then – as Still teases: "Dammit, I'm writing it myself. Why would I use a ghostwriter? I got an 800 verbal [on my SAT]. Do you want a 300-page *People* interview?"

SAMPLE AMAZON REVIEW (FOR *CHANGE PARTNERS*): *"Maybe serves a purpose for someone new to Stills who wants a rough guide."*

DAVID TAN/SHINKOMUSIC/GETTY IMAGES, PAUL BERGEN/REDFERNS

MOONLIGHT AGAIN

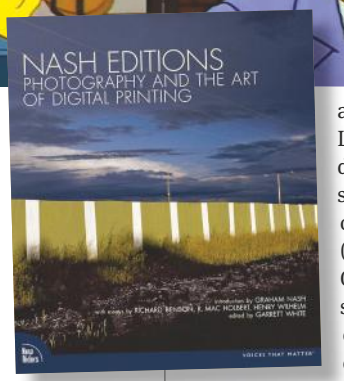
The joke goes that Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young sound like a firm of solicitors. Their extracurricular activities involve far less paperwork...

GRAHAM NASH has a long-standing fascination with photography. His early-adopter experiments with digitally generated images led to him becoming a pioneer in large-format digital printing in the late '80s. Nash purchased an IRIS Graphics 3047 machine (cost in 1990: $126,000) to print high-quality digital art. In 1991, he established Nash Editions alongside erstwhile CSN tour manager R Mac Holbert, who quit the music biz to run the company. One of the first employees was Jack Duganne, who coined the word 'Giclée' for the company's output – a term now used in the art world to describe fine-art digital prints.

A committed liberal who told Forbes he spends "too much time watching after-dinner TV during an election cycle", **Stephen Stills** loves politics. He has long donated time and money to Democratic Party causes, including benefit fundraisers for Maryland governor and one-time presidential nomination hopeful Martin O'Malley. Stills has definitely been a delegate for the Democratic National Convention, but our sources cannot fully substantiate the online rumour that he served as a member of the Florida Democratic Party credentials committee.

As well as appearing on episodes of *The Simpsons* (as himself), **David Crosby** has shown an aptitude for acting. He's had bit parts in films by Spielberg (*Hook*, as Tickles the pirate) and Ron Howard (*Backdraft*, as a hippie). He scored a recurring role as Chester, John's AA sponsor, in the mid-'90s NBC sitcom *The John Larroquette Show*, featured in Ellen Degeneres' *Ellen* and episodes of *Roseanne*, as Bonnie Bramlett's husband.

Carry on *Simpsons*: Croz toons up



From classic cars to hi-res digital music formats via political activism, **Neil Young** has multiple extracurriculars. His most intriguing sideline may be his involvement in the Lionel Company, the iconic US designer and manufacturer of model trains and tracks. An avid toy train collector and Lionel fan, Young helped develop cutting-edge control systems. His flagship contribution was the TMCC (Trainmaster Command Control) device, which featured sounds including chugging, electro-couplers, and – of course! – diesel roar. Shakey was part of a private equity-backed consortium that assumed controlling ownership of the whole business in 1995. At the height of his involvement, Young was a 20 per cent shareholder in the business, influential in introducing new ranges, including the popular Postwar Celebration series. He even got his own special model. In 2004, Lionel released a limited-edition train set based on the album *Greendale*.

DÉJÀ VIEWED? CSNY on DVD

SHORT of rewatching *Woodstock* (ideally on its expanded Blu-ray version), tracking down the unofficial DVD of *A Big Sur Celebration*, or gorging on the bonus disc of the opulent boxset *CSNY 1974*, you're a bit stuck for definitive content on the band. Shockingly, there's not even a definitive career documentary to recommend. Sure, there's always YouTube, but it's a mixed bag, and provenance and picture/sound quality is not guaranteed (and Neil would hate that).

The following DVDs aren't faultless by any means. But they are available, do span the decades, and get some of us a bit closer to one of music's great bucket-list moments: the experience of seeing this lot live.

LONG TIME COMING

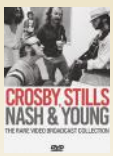
This one's been knocking about in various packaging since 1990 – a less-than-premium assemblage of concert footage, live TV appearances and some talky bits. It covers all the major songs in various forms, but for us the nuggets are the less likely moments: Stills and Croz nailing "4+20" on US TV. Don't expect a 5.1 viewing experience – its major advantage is that it's cheap.

DAYLIGHT AGAIN

A full 60-minute concert film, shot in 1983 at LA's Universal Amphitheater, this has variously enjoyed life as a VHS, Betamax, Laser Disc and latterly DVD. It's a very decent gig, with passable production values, from the Daylight Again Tour, and features a strong 20-song set. The first half-an-hour is the best – though it must be said, the fidgety Crosby lacks a little in application and concentration. (Be fair, it was the '80s). Highlights are many – "Suite: Judy Blue Eyes" and "Wooden Ships" are special indeed.

ACOUSTIC US

Don't let the vintage cover art fool you: this greatest-hits set is from November 1991, filmed at San Francisco's Warfield Theatre. Another red herring is the title. While lacking drums, this certainly isn't acoustic, as Stills' heavy guitar work will tell you. Harmonies aren't quite as tight and bell-like as you'd hope, but as a viewing experience it's pretty good, and it's great to see Crosby back in the game.

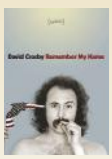


THE RARE VIDEO BROADCAST COLLECTION

Neat, but erratic digest of footage from down the years, culled from TV spots and live shows. The early highlights are "Down By The River" (from *The Music Scene*, September '69) and the sizzling take on "Long Time Gone" – featuring Tom Jones – from *This Is Tom Jones*, that same week. Live Aid and Farm Aid feature, and the '80s and '90s are additionally represented by Young-less slots on *The Tonight Show* and *Letterman*.

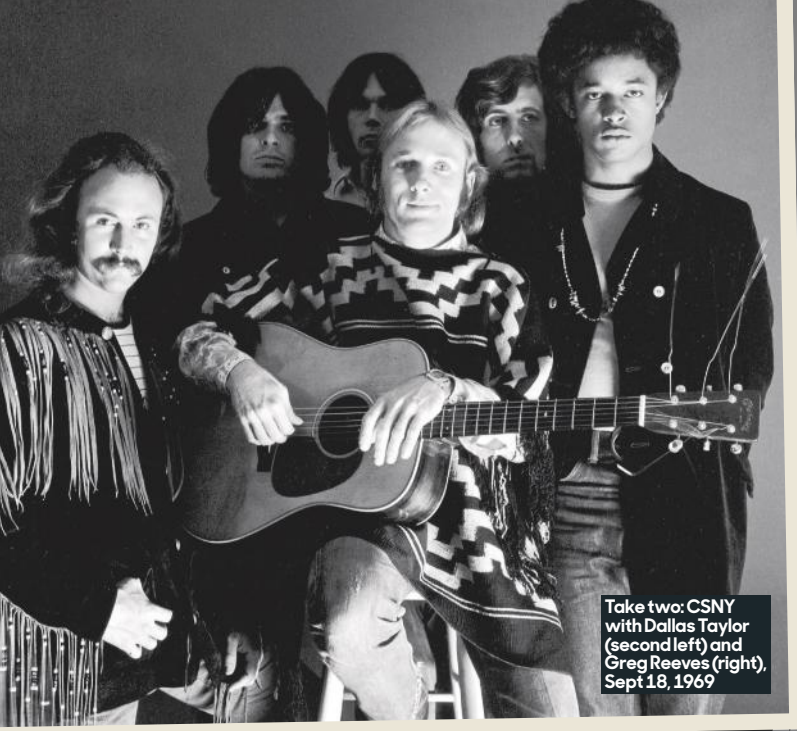
CSNY: DÉJÀ VU

A Bernard Shakey joint. Certainly the best quality and most official of the discs here, this 2008 film, directed by Neil Young, is a very angry souvenir of the 2006 Freedom Of Speech Tour. It mixes interviews, concert footage and heaps of political outrage. A fascinating watch, but CSN (and hence music!) feature less than you might hope.



DAVID CROSBY: REMEMBER MY NAME (2019)

"All the guys I made music with won't even talk to me." The tale of CSNY is a prominent part of this new Cameron Crowe-produced documentary. His incredible experiences, many of them near-death, won't be a revelation to Croz-watchers like ourselves – but the late-life candour of the man makes the movie unmissable.



Take two: CSNY with Dallas Taylor (second left) and Greg Reeves (right), Sept 18, 1969

ALLIES! CSNY's selected sidemen

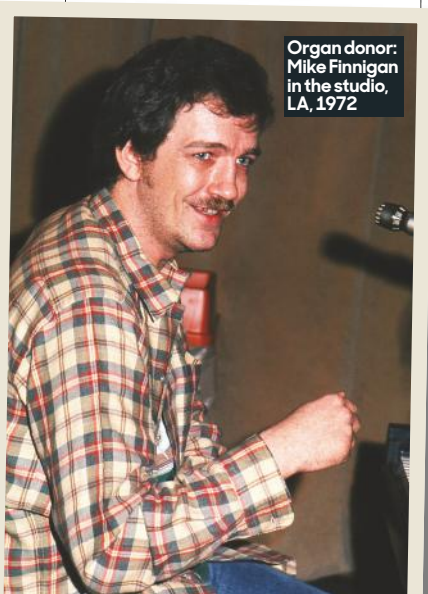
BOTH live and in the studio, the quartet have worked with an ever-moving stream of co-collaborators. The only members to get a front sleeve credit, of course, are **Greg Reeves** and **Dallas Taylor**, who get billing on *Déjà Vu*. Prior to CSNY, the unpredictable Reeves worked under Norman Whitfield at Motown. His fluid, almost funky lines complemented the CSNY sound, but he was fired on the eve of the *Déjà Vu* tour – apparently because he was convinced he was a witch doctor. He played on "Immigration Man" and parts of *After The Gold Rush*, but drifted into relative obscurity, contributing intermittently over the next decade to albums by Dave Mason and George Clinton, and there are rumoured to be unreleased Reeves' recordings from 1970 featuring Stevie Wonder, Nils Lofgren and Duane Allman. He sued CSNY for $1m in royalties in 1978 (settled amicably) and apparently spent time in a Mexican Jail for smuggling marijuana.

Drummer Dallas Taylor (d. 2015) also left CSNY in early 1970, continuing his relationships with the diaspora via work in Stills' Manassas. In the '60s, he'd been a member of Elektra-signed LA psych-rockers Clearlight, and appears on The Doors' *Live In New York* box – with a shout-out from the Lizard King himself. His work in the '70s and '80s included supporting Van Morrison at Montreux in 1974, and touring with Paul Butterfield. Arguably his most memorable contribution is the salty, harrowingly candid 1994 autobiography *Prisoner Of Woodstock* – chronicling his tumble into hippie drug hell.

A mainstay of CSN tours in the '70s and '80s, percussionist **Joe Lala** was a founding member of Blues Image – they of 1970 US hit "Ride Captain Ride". As well as work with the Stills-Young band, he featured on the brief Byrds reunion in '73. Lala switched to acting – his talent with accents saw him bag roles on *Miami Vice*, *Melrose Place* and *Seinfeld*.

A talented multi-instrumentalist, and former member of The Chylds and The Amboy Dukes, **Joe Vitale** joined the troupe for *Long May You Run*, and worked with the group as a drummer on and off until 2009. His '74 solo album *Roller Coaster Weekend* features Rick Derringer and Joe Walsh, and Vitale would work with the Eagles man in the short-lived band Barnstorm. He's been a trusted lieutenant in both CSN and Eagles camps live and in the studio. He even gets a co-credit on the Eagles' *Hotel California*, for "Pretty Maids All In A Row", as well as contributing material and production work for Stills and Nash.

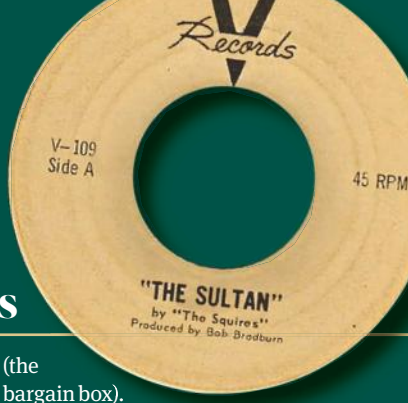
If you want the big Hammond B3 Organ sound, **Mike Finnigan** is your man. He toured and recorded with CSN throughout the '80s, '90s and 2000s – but his full CV is ridiculous. After an early gig on Hendrix's *Electric Ladyland* (that's him on "Rainy Day, Dream Away" and "Still Raining, Still Dreaming"), he has variously toured and recorded with Etta James, Joe Cocker, Buddy Guy, Peter Frampton and Leonard Cohen, amongst many others. Away from music, he's a political blogger, and was a regular contributor to the liberal *Crooks And Liars* website.



Organ donor: Mike Finnigan in the studio, LA, 1972

HELPLESSLY HOPING

A brief guide to CSNY collectables



IT'S all about connections. While CSNY stuff is collectable, of course, it's the quartet's place in the nexus – as a symbol of the spirit of the '60s and '70s – which has the widest appeal. Take Woodstock, for example. There is an intense memorabilia market around original ephemera. **Original Arnold Skolnick posters** – with all correct details in place – can hit thousands. Original one-quart glass **milk bottles from Yasgur's farm** can hit $500 each. ("You are cordially invited to come in and see why we're so proud of the milk we produce," reads the text). Even an original $8 day ticket stub in mint condition can reach $150-plus today.

CSNY's status – in Crosby's phrase – as the "first second-generation supergroup" is another theme here. There are collectors for Byrds, Buffalo Springfield, and yes, The Hollies too – both as part of the psych and beat scenes. Collecting their solo stuff – particularly Neil Young – is a discipline in itself. (At $2,000-plus, his '63 single with **The Squires, "The Sultan"**, is a noted collectable.) The other factor to bear in mind is that all CSN stuff was commercial. Which is all a way of saying that the albums themselves aren't unaffordable. A mint-condition first album – UK pressings on the plum/red Atlantic label came in delicate textured sleeves – may be priced up at £80. But we reckon you can find excellent copies for considerably less – £30, say. Ditto **Déjà Vu** – a great feat of paper engineering, with its faux-leather sleeve, spot gold font and stick-on photo. £30 should definitely secure you a great copy, although near mint will break £50. Early Atlantic singles in the UK have some rarity value – say £20 for a sparkling **"Marrakesh Express"**. Standard pressings will set you back less: a diminishing scale from **4 Way Street** (£15) to **CSN** (the bargain box).

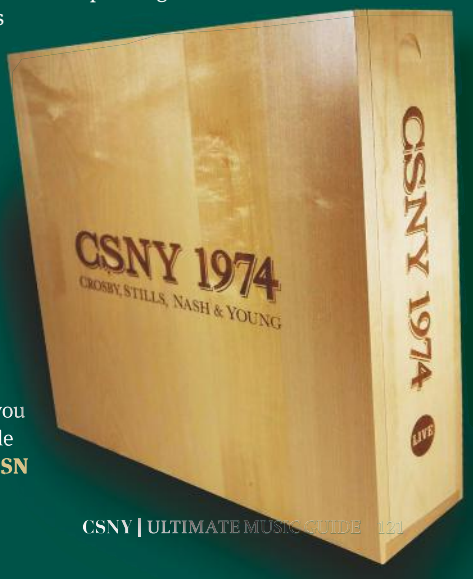
Interestingly, some of the later albums in mint and on vinyl are relatively hard to track down. We've seen **American Dream** listed at £30, for example.

The highest values are for signed items (with clear provenance of authenticity) – $1,000 for a *Déjà Vu* with all four squiggles. Similar prices can be attached to that bastion of the hardcore: promos and white labels. The **mono promo of *Déjà Vu*** is a $1,000+ item (one sold in summer 2019).

There is strong upward movement in retrospective releases – and those that offer improved sound quality. Mobile Fidelity remasters of the classic albums will set you back $200-plus. The amazing **deluxe custom wood boxset of *CSNY 1974*** – six LPs, 188-page book and Blu-ray audio/video – is a thing of beauty.

JACK ROBINSON/GETTY IMAGES, GINNY WINN/MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES

Limited to 1,000 copies, expect to pay $500 for that these days. Look out too for the withdrawn 45rpm **4LP Clarity Test Pressing Box Set of *Déjà Vu***. Pressed on single-sided 200gm vinyl, this is true audiophile catnip. There are only 100 out there, hence the weighty $900 price tag. ●



Stop Me

...if you've heard this one before

"You'll have to go, man..." NIGEL WILLIAMSON meets a flustered Croz in 1999

A RECORDING studio in Hollywood, sometime in early 1999. I'm sitting in the sun on a small deck outside the control room with David Crosby. Ostensibly, I'm here to talk to The Croz about his new band, CPR, which he has recently formed with session guitarist Jeff Pevar and his newly discovered, long-lost son James Raymond.

Crosby has driven to meet me from his home in the Santa Ynez Valley, a couple of hours up the Pacific Coast Highway, not far from Michael Jackson's Neverland ranch. On the flight from London I've re-read my copy of Crosby's 1989 autobiography *Long Time Gone*, which recounts his descent into the chronic addiction that sent him to jail.

It's the first time I've met him and, happily, Crosby seems to have fully recovered. In fact he's pretty much just an older version of the laidback hippie hero I always imagined him to be when I was buying his albums as a teenager in the lace-curtained suburbs of the home counties, another lifetime ago.

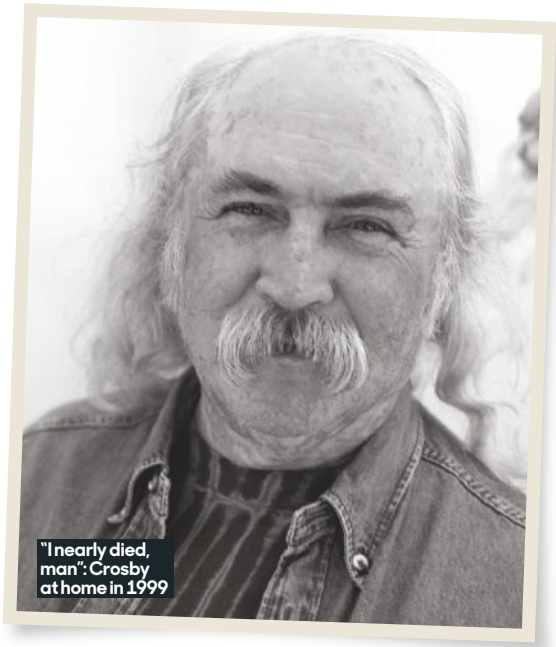
He's wearing a loose denim shirt, and if his walrus moustache is greying it's as luxurious as ever. And, of course, he peppers every sentence with "man", as any self-respecting 1960s survivor should. The only disappointment is that the younger Crosby would surely have skinned up a fat one and invited me to get high with him.

We talk about how his son James, who had been given up for adoption 31 years earlier, had found him while Crosby was in hospital having a liver transplant and how they had started making music together. To be honest, he's a deal more interested in his family band than I am, but you can't fail to be moved by the tale he tells.

"I knew he existed and I had wanted forever to know who this young kid had become and how he had turned out, man," he tells me. After their initial contact by letter, Crosby rang him and suggested they meet.

When they did it was "a very emotional deal, very intense" – but the ice was broken when James told his father that CSN were pretty cool, but not as good as Steely Dan.

When they put a band together, the bloodlines meant there was none of the rivalry that had ripped CSNY apart. "He's better than me," Crosby boasts. "You've got to see him to believe it, man. He's way ahead of me."



"I nearly died, man": Crosby at home in 1999

> "Neil's not like normal people. He'll go crazy"
> DAVID CROSBY

He enthuses some more. "When we play together I'm higher than a kite... it's a blessed thing... he's made me a better human being... it's the best fun you could ever have, man."

This goes on for a while until Crosby notices the copy of his book on my lap. He offers to sign the book, which he does with a flourish. "There's some heavy shit in those pages," he says. "I nearly died, man. It feels good to be alive and still making music."

It's exactly 30 years since the release of the first CSN album and it is has been reported that, without a label deal, the three of them have taken out a loan to record an anniversary album. The Croz confirms it. "Graham and Stephen are my brothers, man, and we'll always be drawn back to making music together," he says.

I tell him about the first time I heard their debut album as a 15-year-old schoolboy in 1969, and that that for a period in the 1970s, *If I Could Only Remember My Name* was my go-to record as balm in times of personal turbulence. "A lot of people say that, man," he answers. "Which is interesting because making that record was my solace at a bad time in my life, too."

We're now getting on like a canyon on fire, it seems – I think I even call him "man". But then Croz is summoned inside to take a phone call, and on his return the relaxed mood has abruptly changed. "You'll have to go, man," Croz now says, ushering me out of my seat, our vibe suddenly unmellowed. What can have happened to so rattle him?

"Neil's on his way," he announces with what now seems a little like mounting panic. "Neil's not like normal people. He'll go crazy if he sees you here."

As I'm hustled out to the parking lot, it dawns on me that he's just handed me an exclusive. If Neil is on his way, that can only mean the 30th-anniversary record isn't going to be a CSN record, but a full-scale CSNY reunion.

In the end, I don't use the story. Maybe I'm jumping to the wrong conclusion, I tell myself. And if I'm right, Crosby might have got it in the neck – and Neil might have pulled another of his infamous walkouts.

Six months later we meet again in San Francisco. CSNY are now holding court to talk about the imminent release of an album which has indeed materialised and which, in fact, is now called *Looking Forward*. "We didn't tell anybody what we were doing," Young says. "We never talked about it being CSNY and if anybody showed up, we told them to leave."

Crosby catches my eye and gives me a quizzical look. Then he nods. Maybe he was struggling to remember who I was and where we had met me before. But I've always liked to think he was offering a silent thank you for sparing him the wrath of Neil. ●

EVAN HURD/SYGMA/SYGMA VIA GETTY IMAGES

SONIC EDITIONS

—Limited Edition Music Photography—

UNCUT

Sonic Editions presents:

Iconic images of
Crosby, Stills and Nash
over the years

Limited edition prints, individually numbered, hand printed and framed to order, from £59/$79 unframed or £89/$139 framed.

Visit www.SonicEditions.com/Uncut

CROSBY, STILLS, NASH & YOUNG

Carry on! *The Ultimate Music Guide* to the winning melodies and political engagement of CROSBY, STILLS, NASH & YOUNG. Celebrating 50 years of a turbulent but ultimately harmonious relationship. "*We are stardust/We are golden…*"

AARON RAPOPORT/CORBIS/GETTY IMAGES

Including...

"WE TAKE IT AND POLISH IT LIKE A JEWEL"

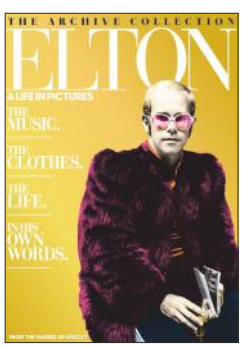
Perfecting the essence of the group

"IT BOOSTS MY EGO TO THE REQUIRED DIMENSION"

Neil Young: a new recruit brings a new dynamic

"A BENIGN DICTATORSHIP"

Decades later, CSNY keep on rocking for the right reasons

ARCHIVE INTERVIEWS AND IN-DEPTH REVIEWS OF EVERY CSN, CSNY AND CROSBY, STILLS AND NASH SOLO ALBUM. *LOVE THE ONES YOU'RE WITH…*

More from UNCUT...